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H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF YORK









PORTRAIT BY LAZLO

# THE DUCHESS OF YORK

AN INTIMATE & AUTHENTIC LIFE-STORY  
INCLUDING MANY DETAILS HITHERTO  
UNPUBLISHED, TOLD WITH THE  
PERSONAL APPROVAL OF  
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

BY  
LADY CYNTHIA ASQUITH

With 32 Illustrations



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## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I "The Youngest Daughter"	9
II Glamis Castle	19
III St. Paul's Waldenbury	29
IV "Trivial Fond Records"	37
V Her Charm as a Child	45
VI Brother and Sister	53
VII Lessons	69
VIII How her Early Years were spent	77
IX The Outbreak of War	95
X Glamis as a Hospital	103
XI A Patient's Account of Glamis Hospital	115
XII The Fire at Glamis Castle	129
XIII Growing Up	137
XIV 1919 to 1922	145
XV How her Friends saw her	155
XVI Engagement	163
XVII The Wedding	177
XVIII Early Married Life	187
XIX The East African Tour (December, 1924 to April, 1925)	197
XX Home and Australia	209
XXI Princess Elizabeth's Ship Comes In	223



## ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Portrait by Lazlo</i>	<i>Frontispiece</i> FACING PAGE
<i>The doorway at Glamis Castle</i>	22
<i>The Duchess with her father and mother at the doorway of Glamis Castle</i>	24
<i>The Chapel at Glamis Castle</i>	26
<i>The Duchess of York at about the same age as her daughter now is</i>	32
<i>Early Childhood</i>	34
<i>Five years old</i>	48
<i>The Duchess of York with her brother David in the garden at Glamis</i>	56
<i>The Duchess and her brother David in Fancy Dress</i>	62
<i>The Duchess on "Bobs"</i>	66
<i>The Duchess in the "Enchanted Wood" of her memories</i>	74
<i>The Duchess dressed up for a Charade in one of the Costumes out of the Old Chest at Glamis</i>	100
<i>Seventeen years old</i>	106
<i>The Duchess just after her hair was put up</i>	118
<i>The Duchess with her Spaniel in the garden at Glamis</i>	126
<i>A Miniature painted by Mabel Hankey in 1919</i>	140
<i>A Photograph taken just before H.R.H.'s Engagement</i>	166
<i>The Duchess with two nieces and a nephew: the chil- dren of Lady Elphinstone</i>	170

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
<i>The Drawing-room at 145 Piccadilly</i>	172
<i>Princess Elizabeth's Night Nursery at 145 Piccadilly</i>	174
<i>The Duchess as Bride leaves 17 Bruton Street</i>	182
<i>The Duchess with Girl Guides at Pudsey, Yorkshire, in April, 1928</i>	190
<i>The Duke and Duchess arrive at Glamis on their Honeymoon</i>	192
<i>Lady Cynthia Mosley's son presents the Duchess with a Bouquet</i>	194
<i>The Duchess with the Earl of Athole passing down a Guard of Honour of Children at the "Fun Fair" St. Dunstan's, Regent Park</i>	200
<i>The Duchess of York presents Sprigs of Shamrock to the Irish Guards at Chelsea Barracks</i>	208
<i>The Famous Smile</i>	212
<i>Mother and Daughter</i>	214
<i>The Duchess arrives at Melbourne</i>	216
<i>The Duchess with her First Catch in Australia</i>	218
<i>A Reunited Family</i>	220
<i>Princess Elizabeth waits for her ship to come in</i>	226
<i>The latest Photograph of Duke and Duchess of York</i>	228



Chapter I  
*"THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER"*



## CHAPTER I

### "THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER"

**T**HE youngest but one of ten children, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, now H.R.H. the Duchess of York, was born on the 4th of August, 1900, at St. Paul's Waldenbury, the Hertfordshire home of her father, the fourteenth Earl of Strathmore.

Twenty-seven is an unusually early age at which to be made the subject of biography: but in defence of this book it must be remembered that few other women have united so early the opportunity to attract, with the capacity to hold the attention and the affections of a nation.

The "youngest daughter" who marries the "King's son" is a figure so glamorously reminiscent of the fairy-tales of our childhood, that on her wedding-day the Duchess could scarcely have failed to appeal to the popular imagination. Whatever her appearance and personality, for the time being she became a heroine, for whom a stage was well raised and well lit and an attentive audience assured.

But the very prominence of her position, the glare of scrutiny to which she was exposed, gave quite as much facility for failure as for success. The becoming limelight might well have turned to a disparaging searchlight. To her, as to every other girl, marriage merely provided an opportunity, though in her case what was made of this opportunity was a matter of wide importance.

Does not the fact that she has given such enduring satisfaction and, in so doing, become one of the delights of our country and the King's dominions, testify to much more than her undeniable natural advantages?

Beauty and charm of manner provide an excellent introduction, but for the difficult position she was entering, qualities even rarer than these were required. It was necessary for her to show an intelligent understanding of what may be called the profession of being royal: to realise that she was undertaking a strenuous task, not merely gracing a feudal formality.

For at her marriage she entered the service of the country, and in this service she has never faltered or frowned. That high sense of obligation, of which the mother, to whom she is so de-



## “THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER”

voted a daughter, sets a shining example, not only makes it impossible for her to shirk any duty, however onerous, but—what is far rarer—enables her by the alchemy of a happy nature to turn duties into delights.

Unaided by tact, however, no amount of conscientiousness could have availed. It is the rare alliance of so many qualities in one ultra-feminine personality that has ensured the Duchess's lasting success.

It is safe to assume that a woman is bound to enjoy anything that she does supremely well. That the Duchess of York receives almost as much pleasure as she gives is an agreeable thought. Certainly it is difficult for anyone who meets her to doubt her happiness. Good acting may deceive, but it cannot infect, and the Duchess has a radiance that is contagious.

Probably we are apt to overestimate the singularity of her position, to regard becoming a royalty as something between taking the veil and going on the stage. To us it seems to involve the sacrifice of private life, and we think with commiseration of the inconvenience of being unable

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

to stir abroad without arousing the click of innumerable cameras.

In reality the Duchess of York's daily life remains much more nearly normal than readers of the newspapers might suppose; and a happy marriage makes a restful background from which to set forth to renewed public triumphs.

It is an accepted commonplace to say that to meet any popular idol is to invite a sense of disillusion. But surely anyone who alleges disappointment on meeting the Duchess lays claim to a very lively imagination? "The camera cannot lie" is one of the greatest lies of all times, and, delightful as are many of the Duchess's photographs, they may all be said to do her injustice. The reason they are misleading is that they fail to give more than a hint of her grace and charm of expression. At best, no black-and-white so-called "likeness" could hope to reproduce the essentially flowerlike quality of her prettiness, and to anyone, however familiar with her photographs, who sees her for the first time, the delicacy of the colouring and texture of the fair skin, set off by the surprising darkness of the hair, and the intense blueness of the eyes, must

## "THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER".

come as a delightful surprise. Of her world-famous smile, suffice it to say that everything that has been said about it is true. Her grace is almost as celebrated as her smile, and it was amusing to hear one of the greatest Film Stars announce that the Duchess of York would have been supreme as a film actress. "She has," the Film Star declared, "the perfection of gesture. *Every* movement tells, and such economy! Never too much! Always enough!"

Much has been said and written about the Duchess of York's "indescribable charm." In all true charm there is, of course, much that must remain elusive and indescribable, but surely, in this case, there is also a sufficiency of *describable* charm. Are not a lovely speaking voice and exquisite manners considerable recognizable assets? "Oh! *what* a polite lady!" was the delighted comment of a little boy after he had been introduced to the Duchess. That a child should be able to distinguish what it was that pleased him shows a very definite quality.

Her manners, bred as they are in the heart, are due to the unfailing wish to make things pleasant for others. That is why she always looks as if

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

to-day were *the* day, and whatever is being said to her the one thing that she wishes to hear. Yet there is nothing in the least mechanical in her manner. It is spontaneous as sunshine, for her infectious ease and lack of apparent shyness owe nothing to the self-confidence of complacency, but are due to a simple naturalness and unself-consciousness, her ceaseless wish to please springing, not from vanity, but from kindness of heart. Instead of wondering what impression she may be making, she concentrates on the well-being of whomever she is talking to. Sargent's remark, made after drawing her portrait, "She is the only completely unconscious sitter I have ever had," explains a great deal.

The Duchess is equally blessed in being able to be dignified without ever being stiff. Rather, it is not the ability to be dignified, but the inability to be anything else; her innate dignity not being an adjunct to put on and take off, but as inherent as the scent of a flower. To turn to lesser things, in dress she shows skill by being always distinctive but never sensational, and the fact that she is one of the few young women

## “THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER”

who can remain unshingled without looking old-fashioned is characteristic of her personality.

Add to all these qualities the gift of an active as well as a responsive sense of humour, and enough has been said to show that, besides the magic of “indefinable charm,” there are plenty of obvious reasons to account for the enthusiasm that the Duchess continues to inspire.

Readers of the following pages may accuse them of bad advocacy.

Where—they may complain—is the light and shade so necessary to any portrait? Unrelieved praise is not only monotonous, it is also apt to seem unconvincing. But since the most painstaking research failed to discover any redeeming faults, how was this regrettable sameness of tone to be avoided?

It was not possible to obey the mandate “season to taste” and invest a heroine with fictitious faults to save her biography from the risk of insipidity.

But if no mitigating faults have been invented, neither have any virtues been magnified. To suppress or diminish them was not the task of a mere recorder.





Chapter II  
*GLAMIS CASTLE*



## CHAPTER II

### GLAMIS CASTLE

IT HAS been pleasant to peer into so happy a childhood as the Duchess of York's, and to inquire how far the promise of the flower was discernible in the bud. Few human plants can have been more favourably reared.

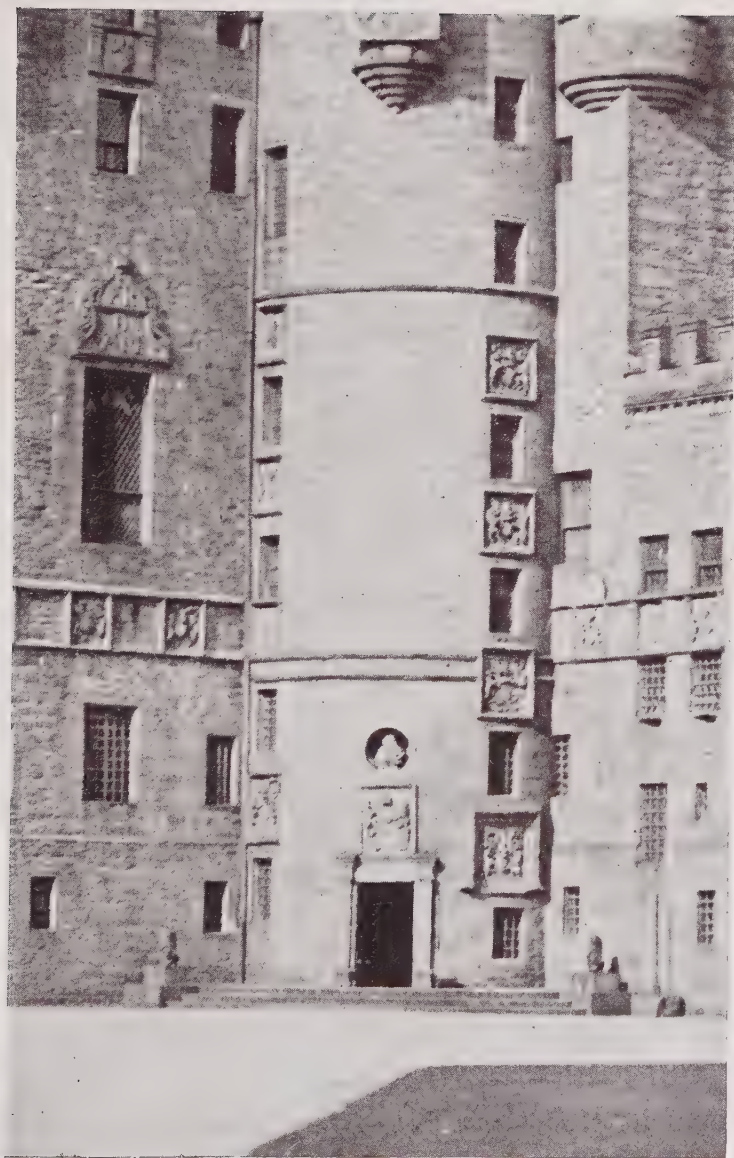
Lady Strathmore, before her marriage Miss Cecilia Cavendish-Bentinck, a cousin of the Duke of Portland, is noted for her charm. From all accounts no mother can ever have been more loving and more loved. Of her it was said, "If there be a genius for family life, she has it." To be the youngest but one of a family so large as to form a clan in itself, is a bracing upbringing. It was in no artificial hothouse, but in the hurly-burly of big brothers and their big dogs, that the Duchess learnt to walk and to live. The environment of her childhood was exceptionally picturesque; her father, who succeeded to the Earldom when she was four years old, being the owner of three beautiful country homes. Of these the one most associated with the family of

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Bowes-Lyon is Glamis Castle, in Forfarshire, which came to the family over five hundred and fifty years ago with Princess Jean, daughter of Robert II, who married Sir John Lyon.

Glamis is one of the names that Shakespeare has sent thrilling through the centuries, and though its connection with anyone so remote as Macbeth is but legendary, it is probably the oldest inhabited house in the British Isles. A forest of weathered sandstone, it rises from the "Strathmore," or in English "the great valley," a fertile plain lying between the Grampians and the heathered Sidlaws. For the building as it now stands, the first Earl, Patrick, 1578-1615, was largely responsible. Over the doorway of the central stairway tower, is the inscription: "Built by Patrick Lord Glamis and Anna Murray," and the same Earl's monogram is seen on various parts of the walls. There were originally nine walls around the castle, and on the lawn in front of it two staunch towers, sole remnant of the first line of defence, still stand. Here there is also a wonderful immense sundial with eighty-one separate dial faces on it.

A stronghold of superstition, Glamis Castle is



THE DOORWAY AT GLAMIS CASTLE





## GLAMIS CASTLE

the seat of more legends than any other in Britain. The air seems thick with tradition, and the peaceful present overweighted by shadows of the grim past; shadows that have not even electric light to disturb them.

The huge circular stone staircase of this mediæval fortress is gauntly impressive. The oldest part of the building, it seems to belong to the dead rather than to the living. The immense thickness of its walls give it a vault-like coolness, and the solidity of its unworn stones has defied time and countless generations of mortal footsteps.

Tradition asserts that it was up these stairs that the wounded King Malcolm was carried bleeding to die in the room still called after him: King Malcolm and innumerable lesser victims of fierce feuds.

And up and down these grim stairs generations of children have rushed in palpitating games of hide-and-seek. In spite of one's first impression, it is difficult to believe that so large and boisterous a family as the present one could fail to lay the most persistent of ghosts.

What other children can ever have known

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

such glorious scope for hide-and-seek? Besides trap-doors, there are mural chambers concealed in the thickness of the walls and secret staircases with access to the roofs. There is also a grisly-looking well (now filled in) that communicated with the vaulted crypt beneath the Great Hall.

I don't think the Duchess ever felt any need to have recourse to the petition in the Scotch litany: "From Ghoulies and Ghostees, and long-legged beasties and things that go flop in the night—Good Lord, deliver us"—but, however undismayed themselves, she and her brothers seldom neglected their admirable facilities for scaring visitors, and were all experts at the fabricating of dummy ghosts, whose frightening forms they would lay out in the most eerie of the dimly-lit rooms.

Children delight in what a Socialist, gloomily gazing at Hampton Court, called "great waste of space," and I'm sure the vast banqueting-hall, now used as the drawing-room at Glamis, must have given great gratification to the Duchess and her brothers and sisters. It is famous for its magnificent vaulted plaster ceiling, finished in 1620, and its two great windows deeply re-



*Photo by Lafayette*

THE DUCHESS WITH HER FATHER AND MOTHER AT THE DOOR-  
WAY OF GLAMIS CASTLE



## GLAMIS CASTLE

cessed in the walls which are eight feet in thickness. In the middle of the south wall there is a fine fire-place, with two carved figures supporting the overmantel.

Of great interest, too, is the Chapel, which is approached by some steps from the Great Hall. This was placed under the ban of Oliver Cromwell, and boasts of a much-used "Priest's Hole," which is still betrayed by an unpainted panel. In this Chapel an interesting picture clearly proclaims the family politics, for the central figure of Christ is portrayed in the unmistakable likeness of the "Martyr King," Charles I.

The castle is, in fact, full of Stuart relics. In the entrance-hall Claverhouse's coat is hung, and a suit of clothes, a sword, and a watch belonging to Prince Charlie are still preserved; all of which he left behind him (the watch under his pillow) when forced to fly hurriedly from the castle.

The bedspread under which he slept was elaborately worked in many-coloured silks on a background of orange satin. It is now quite beyond repair, but Lady Strathmore has had a new one

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

made, on which, with wonderful skill and industry, she has exactly copied the whole of the intricate embroidery of the original, and under the valance at the top she has embroidered the names of all her children.

In the room known as Sir Walter Scott's, the hangings of the bed are still of tartan. In this castle it used to be the custom to drape the bed of any visitor of importance with his own tartan, and in those days the self-respecting hostess was prepared on the shortest notice to welcome with suitable drapery any chief who might propose himself. Owing to this refinement of hospitality, the linen cupboards must have been crammed with tartan serge.

There is no lack of competition, but undoubtedly the grimmest bedroom in the castle is one now unused, named the "Hangman's Chamber," so called, not as might be supposed because occupied by the public executioner, but because the last two persons to sleep in it both hanged themselves.

The following striking list of names is still written on the bell-indicator:



*Photo by Lafayette*



THE CHAPEL AT GLAMIS CASTLE



## GLAMIS CASTLE

“Duncan’s Room.

Old Armoury.

Hangman’s Room.

Prince Charlie’s Room.

King Malcolm’s Room.”

The dining-room now in use is vast, and here, during the childhood and girlhood of the Duchess of York, at the end of dinner was still religiously kept up the picturesque custom of two pipers marching round and round the table, playing their wild music.

Nowadays the family all occupy rooms in a wing which was rebuilt in the last century. This wing overlooks the Dutch garden, and nothing less ghostlike than this part of the house could be imagined.

The present Lady Strathmore has cleverly contributed to the beauty of her home by the creation of a lovely large formal garden, designed by herself. This is entirely encircled by a yew hedge, and has two garden-houses at the top end and a terrace raised about four feet above the rest. In the middle there are four semi-circular stone steps, faced by a fountain

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

lined with minute blue tiles. This fountain is the centre of a fine herbaceous border.

The beds, which form intricate patterns all over the grass, blaze with flowers, and in the recesses of the yew hedge Lady Strathmore intends to place statues—one of each of her children.

All down the low wall of the terrace are beautiful stone-carved vases, with classical acanthus-leaf and other designs given by Lady Strathmore to local workmen, who have a cottage industry for stone-carving in every part of Forfarshire.

This garden was begun in 1907 and finished in 1910. The work was entirely carried out by residents in the parish of Glamis, and on a plaque are engraved all the names of the craftsmen, masons, and stone-carvers who took part in its creation.

Chapter III  
*ST. PAUL'S WALDENBURY*



## CHAPTER III

### ST. PAUL'S WALDENBURY

ST. PAUL'S WALDENBURY, the house in which the Duchess of York was born, was the chief scene of her nursery days. Except for three months of the autumn which were spent at Glamis, a fortnight at Streatlam Castle in Durham—another country seat now sold—and an occasional visit to London, most of her year was spent in Hertfordshire.

David Lyon, the inseparable companion of the Duchess's childhood, tells me that for the first few years after his father succeeded, he and his sister regarded "Glamis as a holiday place, Streatlam as a visit, and St. Paul's as 'Home.'"

No greater contrast to Glamis could be found than this lovely rose-red brick Queen Anne house with magnolia and honeysuckle rioting over its friendly face. Here, no historic associations, no legendary menace compete with the pleasant atmosphere of a happy English home.

This house is suggestive neither of ancestors nor yet of visitors, but essentially of *family*. It



## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

is the benign setting for a long succession of brothers and sisters, giving to each the freedom of every room. It reminds one of such comfortable things—of schoolroom tea—"after lessons"—home-made toffee, Dumb Crambo, and all familiar delights.

It has been so thoroughly lived in. Here, one feels, were no very strict regulations as to the shutting of doors and wiping of shoes, no statements that dogs should be kept in their place (where, I wonder, is that place?), nor that children should be seen but not heard. In all of these rooms children certainly *were* heard: and as, after admiring all the scrapbook screens, you pass through the precautionary high gate of nursery tradition, the clamour of young voices seems still to linger on the air, and at every turn you expect to have to dodge out of the way to avoid the rush of helter-skelter children, racing to get out into the garden.

St. Paul's is a house not haunted by the dead but by the living.

Surely, when she revisits it, the Duchess must often meet the little Lady Elizabeth Lyon of twenty years ago!



THE DUCHESS OF YORK AT ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS HER  
DAUGHTER NOW IS



## ST. PAUL'S WALDENBURY

The nursery, now often occupied by the Duchess's baby Princess Elizabeth, is a real nursery, suggestive of precious, shabby, hugged-out-of-shape toys, and its high fender recalls comfortable dryings by the fire and the delicious smell of toasting bread. This pleasant room has not been subjected to the fickleness of fashion, its walls being still adorned by the old favourite story-pictures that were framed and hung up by the gardener forty-five years ago.

It must have been lovely to be a child in the surroundings of St. Paul's Waldenbury. On a summer's day the place has about it an especially delicious smell of country, and an insistent drowsy hum of bees and cooing of wood-pigeons. Lovely alleys of smooth green grass invite running feet, and in the garden are a dairy, a knobby oak too stout for six children's outstretched arms to encompass, peacocks of clipped hawthorn, ilex and mulberry trees; every variety of rose behind hedges of clipped yew, and an ambitious and wonderfully successful rock-garden.

There is also a seventeenth-century pleached-lime alley trained in Latin mottoes, but *the* feature and fascination of the place is a wood laid

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

out by Le Notre, or one of his pupils. Merging into the garden, this small starfish-shaped wood of converging green alleys gives the most amazing illusion of being part of a large forest. Wandering in its shade, it is impossible to believe that you are within call of the road by which you drove up to the house past that wonderful, flagrant field of poppies.

Of this home of her childhood, the scene of so many happy springs and summers, the Duchess has a medley of memories. An iridescent haze shimmers over those early days, but as she searches back through the intervening years, a throng of unforgettable sights, scents and sounds assails her. The shimmering haze receives her, and once more she knows what it feels like to be so little that the smell of hot grass is close to her face and very strong.

This is what she goes back to (so she tells me): "At the bottom of the garden, where the sun always seems to be shining, is THE WOOD—the haunt of fairies, with its anemones and ponds, and moss-grown statues, and the BIG OAK under which she reads and where the two ring-doves, Caroline-Curly-Love and Rhoda-Wrig-



*Photo by Speaight*

EARLY CHILDHOOD





ley-Worm, contentedly coo in their wicker-work 'Ideal Home.'

"There are carpets of primroses and anemones to sit on, and she generally has tea either in the shadow of the statue of Diana or near another very favourite one called the 'Running Footman' or the 'Bounding Butler' (to grown-up people known as the Disc-Thrower). These statues live in cut-out grassy places, and sometimes there are wild strawberries around them, sometimes bee-orchises.

"Whenever—and this is often—a dead bird is found in this enchanted wood it is given solemn burial in a small box lined with rose-leaves."

"Her small brother David is always with her and usually a tiny Shetland pony called 'Bobs.' Bobs will follow her into the house and even walk up and down long stone steps, and she has to be very careful that he doesn't tread on her little brother's toes.

"Now it is time to go haymaking, which means getting very hot in a delicious smell. Very often she gets up wonderfully early—about six o'clock—to feed her chickens and make sure they are safe after the dangers of the night. The

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

hens stubbornly insist on laying their eggs in a place called the FLEA HOUSE, and this is where she and her brother go and hide from Nurse.

“Nothing is quite so good as the FLEA HOUSE, but the place called the HARNESS ROOM is very attractive too. Besides hens there are bantams-whose-eggs-for-tea-are-so-good. Also Persian kittens and tortoises.” . . .

From THE WOOD—the Enchanted Wood, the Duchess is recalled with a start by the tread of her nurse. It *is* the Nurse of her own childhood, but she is now carrying the baby Princess Elizabeth!

Chapter IV  
*"TRIVIAL FOND RECORDS"*



## CHAPTER IV

### "TRIVIAL FOND RECORDS"

"**H**APPY is the nation that has no history." The same may be said of childhood. The story of the Duchess of York's early life is peacefully devoid of startling incidents. It is unpunctuated by any melodramatic accidents or illnesses. She was never either lost or stolen, neither, I regret to say, did she, so far as I can discover, encounter any gipsy gifted with the power to foretell her future.

It would be agreeable to be able to say that she was very naughty, but alas! it would not be true.

There was plenty of what the tenants of Glamis Castle still call her "merry mischief." This "merry mischief" they are not likely to forget, for many of them spent considerable time tied by string to fences and trees. Sacrifices to realism, they were greatly contributing to the joys of the game of Red Indians. Visitors too were often startled by cascades of water descending from above, followed by triumphant peals

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

of laughter from a child concealed on the roof.

Her brother David tells me that he and his sister once decided to run away, and laid in a store of emergency provisions. But as their mother has no recollection of the incident, I gather that they cannot have run very far. On one occasion, proudly remembered, they gave a chauffeur palpitations by placing a football directly in front of one of the front wheels of the car. As the car started the football burst with a terrific explosion.

But amongst the inevitable pranks of able-bodied childhood, search as I will, I regret to say that I can only find *one* on which the dignity of the name of crime can possibly be conferred. This crime was perpetrated when she was six years old, and the culprit confessed.

Wriggling into the arms of a favourite visitor, she whispered, "I have been *so* naughty. I'll tell you, but you must promise not to tell mother before I do."

*Visitor:* "What have you done, Elizabeth?"

*Culprit:* (with wan pride) : "I have taken the

pair of scissors Mother has just given me and cut up all my new sheets in strips."

*Visitor:* "What will Mother say when you tell her?"

*Culprit:* "Oh! Elizabeth!"—which was precisely all that Lady Strathmore did say!

It's regrettable, but truth must be told, and in spite of this scissor crime I'm afraid it is impossible to claim for my heroine the title of a naughty child.

The proof of this is that one of her governesses, a woman by no means easy to place, could only find one complaint to make against this pupil. It was that "her hands were too small!"

Except for a somewhat excessive appreciation of chocolate cake, it does not appear that the Duchess even had the pleasure of being really greedy.

Of tears I can find very few traces, though no doubt sufficient were shed each time her youngest brother David returned to school. The other occasions on which they appear to have flowed fastest were three:

(1) When one set in authority found it expedient to chastise the beloved David with a



hunting-crop. The tender-hearted sister sat up in bed and sobbed, although the crop was never handled with sufficient skill to check the victim's peals of laughter.

(2) When a beloved bullfinch, called Bobby, who for many years had fed off her plate at meals, was discovered dead—murdered by a cat. Her brother tells me how she placed poor Bobby in a cedar-wood pencil-box and reverently laid him to rest in a deep, deep grave, tearfully solemnising an interminable funeral service entirely of her own composition.

(3) (This was a very bitter occasion). She and her brother had bought two beautiful Berkshire pigs—very clean and black and enticing. These pets were christened Lucifer and Emma, and were cherished for several months. One day Lucifer was forcibly removed to furnish the prize for a raffle at a local bazaar. The horrified children broke open their savings boxes and succeeded in buying up about fifty per cent of the tickets. But all in vain! Lucifer was won by a stranger, and passed out of their loving care.

Of vanity I can find no record. The only time when she appears to have been puffed up with

## “TRIVIAL FOND RECORDS”

pride was when stung by a bee. Flushed with elation, she rushed about shouting: “Clever me! clever me! Me’s got a sting in my chin—a whole sting in my chin! Would anyone like to take it out?”

Alas! No one can tell me of any huffs, rages, sulks, tantrums, dumps, or doldrums, so I must assume that none there were. Certainly those in charge of the Duchess seem to have found it agreeable to remain. Clara Cooper Knight came as her nurse when she was a month old and stayed till she was eleven, and she it is who is now nurse to the Princess Elizabeth. She remembers the Duchess as “an exceptionally happy, easy baby: crawling early, running at thirteen months and speaking very young.”

When Clara Cooper Knight left, Clara Mac-Clean followed as children’s maid, and she is still with the Duchess as lady’s maid.

“Lady Elizabeth always makes everyone so happy” is her excellent reason for staying.



Chapter V

*HER CHARM AS A CHILD*



## CHAPTER V

### HER CHARM AS A CHILD

THE charm, vivacity, consideration for others and grace of manner for which the Duchess of York is now celebrated, showed themselves very early. Though full of enjoyment of all that children enjoy, she was always fond of her elders, and no child can ever have left more vivid impressions on grown-up people. Many declare themselves to have been "enslaved beyond release," and all agree that she "radiated charm." From all I can gather the child was the miniature of the woman. Curiously enough her demure grace, and dainty dignity early earned her the nickname, universally used, of "Princess Elizabeth," and it was to her that Mrs. Andrew Lang dedicated her delightful book *Princess and Princesses*. Her famous social instinct showed itself in babyhood. She lisped civilities, and before she could speak plainly knew how to put others at their ease.

Imagine her, still at the stage of having to bring both feet in turn upon the same step,

busily conducting guests upstairs to show them their rooms! In fact, she appears to have played the perfect hostess quite as soon as she was able to play Ring-a-ring-a-Roses. At an incredibly early age her mother found her pouring out tea (for which she had rung herself) and making small talk to a large party of neighbours who had arrived too soon.

"Shall us sit and talk?" the three-years' child said to a distinguished visitor, gently but firmly detaching him from the rest of the party and leading him into one of the tiny rooms off the drawing-room, and there they *did* sit and talk for three-quarters of an hour.

In earliest infancy she spoke with a delicious, quaint precision. Unlike those of most children, her remarks were usually about other people.

When she was three she delighted Mr. Ralston, who for forty-five years had been factor on the estate, by saying, "How do you do, Mr. Ralston? I haven't seen you look so well, not for years and years, but I am sure you will be sorry to know that Lord Strathmore has got the toothache."

Early signs were also given of the housewifely





FIVE YEARS OLD



instinct. A frequent and welcome visitor in the busy stillroom, she said one day, "If you *could* make the pats of butter a little smaller, it would be much better. Persons leave some of the big pats on their plates and that is very waste."

Neither was the pantry neglected. Here she was in the habit of coming to levy pennies with which to buy sweets. "May I have silver pennies this time?" she once gently enquired.

A frequent visitor at Glamis wrote to me: "Elizabeth was always the most astonishing child for knowing the right thing to say. One day, when she was seven, my daughters were consulting as to the best method of dealing with a very difficult guest. 'Oh, I know!' exclaimed one at last. 'Let's ask Elizabeth. She can talk to *anyone*.'"

All agree as to the remarkable tact shown in early childhood. Had she been consciously rehearsing for her future position she could scarcely have practised her manners more assiduously: but then, as now, their excellence was due, not to the desire to win praise, but to the instinct to make others comfortable. Thus, being perfectly spontaneous and not a means to an

end, her good behaviour never gave offence even to those stern critics, other children.

Her precocious sense of fitness must, however, sometimes have been hampering to so lively a child. For instance, when she knocked at the stillroom door and said, "May I come in and eat more—*much* more of that chocolate cake than I liked to eat while it was upstairs?"

In spite of diligent efforts I can only discover one occasion on which she slightly embarrassed her parents. Lady Nina Balfour, a great friend of the family, had just come into the room. "We haven't had no presents lately, Elizabeth," David Lyon remarked to his sister.

"No," said she cheerfully. "But perhaps we shall have some big ones now Nina has come to London."

"Are you engaged, Elizabeth?" enquired a visitor. "No, not yet. It was only Mother what gave me this ring."

Lady Strathmore considers the following the most characteristic of her daughter's baby sayings. Two people were talking together, unaware that Lady Elizabeth, then five years old, was in the room. "How sad to think," said one,

## HER CHARM AS A CHILD .

“that poor X. will only be married for his position and money.” “Perhaps,” said a small voice, faintly tinged with reproach, “perhaps some one will marry him 'cos she loves him.”

The Duchess is now an admirable letter-writer, but of any literary efforts she may have made as a child, only one has been preserved. The other day she found in an old copy-book the beginning of an essay.

It was entitled *The Sea*, and started: “Some governess are nice and some *are not*.” That was all.



Chapter VI  
*BROTHER AND SISTER*





## CHAPTER VI

### BROTHER AND SISTER

THERE was only a difference of fifteen months between the Duchess and her brother David, and, as they were considerably younger than any other members of the family, the "two Benjamins," as Lady Strathmore called them, had the nursery to themselves and were inseparable. The little boy followed his protective sister like a shadow, and when visitors were about, she always preceded him into the room. "David's rather shy," she would say, editing him with tender apology.

Many people were laid under the spell of these two children.

Mrs. Thompson, a faithful friend of the family, and in their service as housekeeper from 1886 to 1915 writes:

"They were the dearest little couple I have ever seen, and the Duchess always took the lead. She would come tripping down the stairs and it would be, 'Mrs. Thompson, have you any of those nice creams left for us?' and she would

herself open the cupboard and help herself to what she liked best.

“I remember the Duchess inviting me to play cricket with them. She had great fun at me as I could not send the ball anywhere near the wicket. She was a merry child and always friendly. I can see her now coming outside the window of the housekeeper’s room with her pony Bobs, and making him beg for sugar, and often she would come up by herself and pop her head up suddenly and make us all jump, at which she would have a good laugh; she had a very happy childhood, and always good health to enjoy it. I used to love to watch her movements. She and her brother were like little fairies dancing about.”

In the dairy at Glamis there are also happy recollections of this inseparable pair. They used to approach by the wood and burst in covered with feathers they had picked up and, with threats of scalping, extort a drink of milk and a biscuit.

The most enchanting impression left on the memories of the many visitors who delighted in



THE DUCHESS OF YORK WITH HER BROTHER DAVID IN THE GARDEN AT GLAMIS



## BROTHER AND SISTER

these two children was made by their dancing lessons with Mr. Neal, a great character who had played the fiddle for fifty years (that side of his beard against which he pressed his instrument was quite worn away). He skipped round the room after the children as he played, but if his limbs were frisky, his countenance was very solemn, and his seriousness imparted itself to the children, who went through their steps with a gravity only broken by their pleased smiles and rippling laughter when applause greeted them at the end.

Their only grievance against their mother was when she made them dance a minuet at some entertainment given at Glamis. Fond as they were of dancing and of fancy dress, the publicity of so large an audience was not to their taste.

For this performance Lady Strathmore made for her daughter a lovely long dress of rose-pink and silver, of the period of James I, and David Lyon wore one of the treasures of the dressing-up chest, the parti-coloured dress of family jester, with cap and bells.

In his account of a visit to the Castle when he was Minister of Glamis, Mr. Stirton, now min-

ister of Craithie and Chaplain to the King at Balmoral, tells of the charm of these children's dancing.

"Entering the Castle by the low main doorway which still displays the huge knocker dated 1689, and passing the 'yett' of massive iron from which, as Sir Walter Scott said one might have imagined Lady Macbeth (with the form and feature of Siddons) issuing forth to receive King Duncan, I mounted the great stone staircase and entered the drawing-room, which in former times was the banqueting-hall, the splendid department which Earl Patrick described in his diary, still preserved at the Castle, as a 'room which I have ever loved.'

"Here, amid these surroundings, so full of historical associations, I was kindly greeted by the Countess of Strathmore and other members of the family assembled there. After some general conversation the Countess sat down at the piano, and played a few bars of a quaint old minuet. Suddenly, as if by a magician's touch, two little figures seemed to rise from the floor and dance, with admirable precision and grace, the stately measure so characteristic of the eight-

eenth century. These little children were the Hon. David Lyon and Lady Elizabeth Lyon, the youngest son and daughter of the house.

"The former had donned part of the dress of the family jester and the latter had assumed the robe and cap of a little girl of the period of James I and VI. Surely never was there such a setting for so bright and fascinating a scene. The lofty rooms, the historic surroundings, the dresses of a bygone period, the quaint music, so suggestive of Purcell and his formal school, all combined to form a scene which could not readily be forgotten. As the dance proceeded the glamour and illusion seemed to increase. Was it reality, or had the psychic influence of historic Glamis clouded the mind and conjured up a scene to delude the senses? No 'crystal ball' experience could have been more effective.

"For one brief, yet supreme, half-hour the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries were one. New reveries were forming, leading to others still more historically suggestive and alluring, when suddenly the music stopped and the little dancers, making a low bow and curtsy, clapped



their hands with delight, and in this way brought the minds of all back to present-day reality.

"Little choruses of praise were heard on every side, and Lady Elizabeth, on being asked by the writer the name of the character she had adopted, said with great *empressement*: "I call myself the Princess Elizabeth."

Mr. Stirton has other recollections of the Duchess's childhood.

"She was particularly fond of coming up to see my collection of family relics and curios, and showed a wonderful knowledge of these things for so little a child. I have a note from her, written at a very early age, in which she asks if she and her governess might come up and see my 'objays d'art,' as she calls them. She was particularly fascinated by my portrait of Prince Charles Edward, and always went up to it and gazed at it. She also wanted very much to go down into the burial vault of her ancestors, but I drew the line at that. She spoke a great deal about her little brother David, and always said, 'He is such a darling.'"

This "darling bruvver" writes that he "can always remember his sister being a most unself-



## BROTHER AND SISTER

ish person and a most enchanting companion." His only complaint was her proficiency at lessons. "She was very quick at learning and always left me far behind to the despair of the teachers."

He, too, has vivid memories of the charms of the building the Duchess has enshrined in her memory as the "Flea House." "A great resort of ours was an old and half-ruined Brew-house at St. Paul's Waldenbury. This attic could only be reached by a very rotten ladder, the rungs of which would certainly have broken if an adult had attempted the ascent. Consequently our nurse was unable to come up and retrieve us. The attic was considered our very own parlour, though I must admit that a good many fleas intruded. In it we kept a regular store of forbidden delicacies acquired by devious devices. This store consisted of apples, oranges, sugar, sweets, slabs of chocolate Menier, matches and packets of Woodbines. Many other things there were besides, and to this blissful retreat we used, between the ages of five and six, to have resource whenever it seemed an agreeable plan to escape our morning lessons."

He also vividly remembers the thrill of early

dissipations. "Once a year we were taken to the Drury Lane Pantomime where we sat enthralled from start to finish, usually with insufferable headaches from the unaccustomed glare."

And later on, after school had claimed him: "During the holidays, my sister and I used to go to theatres as often as we were allowed—usually in the cheaper seats as our purses never bulged. She had a wide taste in plays, but I think Barrie's were her favourites, though Shakespeare was by no means slighted."

As I never saw them as children, I will add an impression of them, kindly written for this book by a very old friend of the family.

"The Lyon family have lived for six hundred years at Glamis, but in spite of its great architectural beauty, I associate the childhood of the Duchess of York less with her Scottish than with her more modest English home. The overwhelming size of Glamis dwarfs human beings seen against its vast bulk, and the inevitable severity of a grim mediæval fortress, however picturesque it may be, seems an inappropriate setting for so dainty and fascinating a child as H.R.H. was in the glory of her early youth.



*Photo by Lafayette*

THE DUCHESS AND HER BROTHER DAVID IN FANCY DRESS



## BROTHER AND SISTER

Glamis is less a setting than a background, and a background overweighted with the memories of countless centuries.

"About St. Paul's Waldenbury, her Hertfordshire home, there lingers a faint fragrance, like a whiff of potpourri of the eighteenth century. The red brick Queen Anne house, with its pleached walks, its moss-grown statues, its fountains, its garden temples and its three converging avenues, cut through the wood in French fashion, either by Le Notre himself or by one of his pupils, each avenue leading the eye to some culminating point, here the tower of the village church, there two large statues, seems at once remote from our own period and also unstained by memories of old feuds and bloodshed, and forms thus to my mind a more fitting frame for happy youth.

"The Duchess comes of a large family of ten, in which the daughters were obliging enough to be born at such intervals that each formed a pair with one of the brothers. The eldest surviving daughter and the eldest son had but a year between them. Then came three boys who consorted together, then a girl, now Lady Rose

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Leveson-Gower, and her brother Michael, followed by the Duchess of York and her brother David. The family thus drifted naturally into pairs, with the three unpaired boys forming a little clan of their own. They were an unusually good-looking family, and they all alike possessed a curious power of charm, due perhaps to their being perfectly natural and unaffected. The Duchess of York and her brother David were the most beautiful children I have ever seen, she with the traditional Irish blend of dark hair and intensely blue eyes, David ruddy as befits his name, with blue eyes and golden curls. Truth compels me to admit that these three pairs of brothers and sisters, though devoted to each other, used at times to quarrel furiously, using hands and teeth on each other with all their youthful vigour. For some reason, ever since the Duchess of York was born, I always addressed her as 'Princess Elizabeth,' kissed her hand, and invariably made her a low bow, which she acknowledged haughtily but courteously.

"She was an extraordinarily graceful, dainty and engaging child. Her mother had made for her a long dress of rose-coloured brocade, copied

## BROTHER AND SISTER

from a Velasquez picture: full pleated and gathered at the waist, stiffened with a hoop and coming right down to her feet. She wore this with a little cap of gold tissue, and it was the prettiest sight in the world to see this graceful little figure dancing in this red dress, daintily lifting her skirts to show that she was doing her steps properly, and bubbling over with mirth. I have vivid recollections of seeing this little rose-clad fairy dancing out into the garden in her long dress and skipping daintily under the interlaced boughs of the 'pleached' lime walks, called by the family the 'Cloisters,' a little vision of merry gracefulness. It was very like a living Watteau panel.

"For the reasons I have given I always associate her with St. Paul's Waldenbury rather than with Glamis, perhaps because the setting was far more *intime*.

"Her brother, the comely David, had as a child the uncanny Scottish gift of 'second sight.' I was frankly sceptical about this art, and suspected David of the time-honoured gift of pulling his elders' legs, until the third year of the War, when his elder brother Michael was re-



ported by the War Office as killed. The Strathmores had already had one son killed and were broken-hearted at this fresh disaster, and David was summoned from school to remain at home with his parents.

"He lunched with me one day, and I pointed out to him that he should not wear coloured clothes and a coloured tie so soon after his brother's death.

" 'Michael is not dead,' protested David. 'I have seen him twice. He is in a big house surrounded with fir trees. He is not dead, but I think he is very ill, because his head is tied up in a cloth.'

"I pointed out that the War Office had reported Michael as killed and they were not likely to have made a mistake, but David would not budge. 'Michael is not dead,' he maintained, 'because I have seen him twice, and I won't wear mourning for him.'

"Three months later David proved to be perfectly right. Michael had been shot through the head, and it was some time before he recovered his just mental powers and was able to let his





THE DUCHESS ON "BOBS"



## BROTHER AND SISTER

family know that he was in a prison hospital in Germany.

“David saw, too, what he called ‘grey people’ in some of the rooms at Glamis. According to him they suddenly appeared, moved about and as suddenly disappeared, without however alarming him in the least. I was equally sceptical about these ghostly visitants, but David’s accounts never varied and he described his grey people’s costumes down to the last detail. Is it quite impossible that David may have seen with his inner eyes some of his fifteenth-century forbears in their former terrestrial surroundings? *Quien sabe?*”

“With a divining-rod in his hand he was extraordinarily susceptible to underground water, but as he grew older and ceased to be a child, this uncomfortable and uncanny power of ‘second sight’ suddenly left him.

“And so the Lyons grew up, but retained all their power of charm, and their curious attractive qualities.

“The three daughters were the sunshine of their father’s house until the inevitable moment

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

came when they had to transfer that sunshine to their husbands' houses.

"Lord and Lady Strathmore must, I think, feel reconciled to their own loss by the knowledge that, in the case of their youngest daughter, that sunshine of manner has conquered far-off continents with its charm."

Chapter VII  
*LESSONS*



## CHAPTER VII

### LESSONS

LADY STRATHMORE never submitted to the growing fashion of banishing daughters to boarding-schools. When she was about nine years old the Duchess went for two terms to a day-school in London, where she won the prize for literature, given for an essay.

Except for this brief school career, she was educated entirely at home; in fact, she and her brother's first and most successful governess was Lady Strathmore.

"My Mother," writes David Lyon, "taught us to read and write. At the age of six and seven we could each have written a fairly detailed account of all the Bible stories. This knowledge was entirely due to our mother's teaching. She also taught us the rudiments of music, dancing, and drawing, at all of which my sister became fairly proficient."

Later on came French governesses, with whom the children were always made to speak French, with the result that when she was ten the

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Duchess could speak it quite as readily as English. The dreaded time of separation between the brother and sister came one sad autumn. I have found an old tear-stained letter: "David went to school for the first time on Friday. I miss him horribly." On David's departure the French governess of the time was succeeded by a German lady. Henceforth Lady Elizabeth had to make the best of lonely lessons.

She worked hard, soon learnt to chatter in German, and inspired a deep devotion in the heart of "Miss Fräulein," as the new governess was called.

Lady Elizabeth became quite attached to her. Not so the less tolerant David, who, whenever he returned for the holidays, complained of many faults.

It does seem that she was a little lacking in tact. One day David, tall with pride, went out for the first time with a gun and returned triumphant, carrying a hare. He decided that this trophy of his budding sportsmanship should grace the schoolroom table. The hare was carefully cooked and ceremoniously served.

Unfortunately that day the children happened



to be late for luncheon, but when they reached home they found the hearty Fräulein had eaten the hare practically whole, leaving for the hunter nothing but the head.

This crowning offence caused a rupture. Diplomatic relations between the Fräulein and the brother of her pupil—always precarious—were finally broken off, and she departed from Glamis, where she is still remembered in a legendary way as having shaken the foundations of the Castle by her Teutonic tread.

Her place was taken by an English lady who immediately recommended herself to her pupil and her brother for many reasons, not the least important being her proficiency at tennis, a game at which her predecessors had been but broken reeds.

The Duchess passed the Junior Oxford examination, but after the age of fourteen her education was too much interrupted by the irregularities of life in war-time to allow of her going in for any more examinations. Neither was it possible for her to go abroad for the process quaintly called "finishing." When in

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

London she always had lessons in music and in dancing, both of which she loved.

Madame D'Egville, whose dancing classes she attended, remembers her as one of her most "graceful and intelligent pupils," and her music mistress, Madame Matilde Verne, has written me the following recollections:

"My first remembrance of the Duchess of York is of a very pretty, vivacious little girl dancing into the room, throwing her arms around her mother's neck and crying: 'Oh! thank you, Mummie, thank you!' and then to us all, 'My Mother is always so kind!'

"Shortly afterwards, she and her brother David both became pupils at my newly-opened Pianoforte School, and very intelligent pupils they were. Lady Elizabeth had a very good ear for music and learnt quickly, so at the end of six months she was actually able to play at the children's concert. My sister, who gave the first lessons, writes about this:

" 'The Duchess remembers this concert well (she told me so when we went to see her the day before she was married), because she "got out" in her piece and was ashamed. But she must



THE DUCHESS IN THE "ENCHANTED WOOD" OF HER MEMORIES



## LESSONS

have been a "star" performer, for she played last and it was always my custom to put the best player at the end of the programme. She also sang very prettily. She was a dear little girl. I used to lift her on and off the piano-stool oftener than was necessary just because she was so nice to take hold of.'

"I myself remember a funny little incident in connection with this concert. Just before it all the children had extra practice with an assistant teacher. One day, in what we called the Paderewski Room, I heard some one being taught an exercise that all pupils, old and young, detest. It seemed to me that the struggle was going on too long, so I went into the Torture Chamber and found that little Elizabeth was the victim. 'We have only just begun,' said the teacher firmly.

"I looked at the child. Though reverent in face, there was a warning gleam in her eyes as she said to the teacher, 'Thank you very much. That was wonderful,' and promptly slid off the music-stool, holding out her tiny hand in polite farewell. She always had perfect manners. I am glad to remember that she was easily coaxed

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

back to the piano, and that the practice lesson ended happily.

"Later on, when I gave her lessons myself, she had grown into a most fascinating girl. The charm of her simplicity, her impulsive, warm-hearted manner, the innocent expression in her lovely eyes, are beyond my powers of description.

"I gave her her last lessons at Glamis six months before her engagement was announced. She was then more serious than usual, owing I think partly to the fact that Lady Strathmore had been very ill and she had helped, with the most unselfish devotion, to nurse her."

Very soon after the Duchess's marriage Madame Verne went to tea with her, and her first curtesy was interrupted by her old pupil exclaiming: "You *must* give the Duke of York some lessons. I have already begun to teach him his notes, and he knows three!"

Chapter VIII  
*HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE  
SPENT*





## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

**D**URING the Duchess's early childhood, though the year was chiefly divided between the English and Scottish homes, there were frequent visits to London, where Lord Strathmore then owned 20 St. James's Place, a beautiful Adam house.

Many boys and girls dislike children's parties, gratified greed failing to make up for social discomfort. But the Duchess was untroubled by shyness, and loved the parties which—so her hostesses tell me—she appreciably brightened.

She was always surrounded by adoring children. One of her contemporaries has written the following account of the impression she made on him when she was six or perhaps seven years old.

"No child I can remember had charm to anything approaching the same degree as the Duchess of York. If I peer back into the mists of childhood, a few pictures detach themselves, made memorable and lit up by the rosy glow of

her personality. I was a sentimental, susceptible little boy. Every month saw some new goddess dawn over my horizon, some little girl 'my favourite friend' whom I used to wait for in Hyde Park in the morning, or make an anxious rush to sit beside at a party. They did not all return my affection. With the austerity of their age they were wont to prefer a companion of their own sex, but I persevered. At this time I was devoted to M., chiefly on account of her long hair which I considered the distinguishing mark of feminine beauty; and I was pursuing her smooth, black plaits through the slim Adam columns and pale plastered drawing-rooms of Lansdowne House, when my shoulder was seized by a grown-up lady, who said, 'I want you to come and talk to this little girl; she is called Elizabeth Lyon.' I turned and looked and was aware of a small, charming rosy face, around which twined and strayed rings and tendrils of silken hair, and a pair of dewy grey eyes. Her flower-like mouth parted in a grave, enchanting smile, and between the pearly teeth flowed out tones of drowsy melting sweetness that seemed to caress the words they uttered. From that mo-

## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

ment my small damp hand clutched at hers and I never left her side. Forgotten were the charms of M. Her hair might stretch from London to Paraguay for all I cared. Forgotten were all the pretenders to my heart. Here was the true heroine. She had come. I had seen and she had conquered.

“For the next two summers she figured largely in my life. I remember her playing in the Park, racing beside her yellow-haired brother, her hair flying in the wind, her cheeks bright with the exercise, her clear infectious laugh ringing out: or sitting demurely at the tea-table: or best of all, at a fancy-dress party dressed as a Vandyck child, with high square bodice and stiff satin skirts, surrounded by a bevy of adorers. I thought she was like the Princess of every fairy-tale I had ever read. ‘Why, she’s exactly like one of the children of Charles I,’ said a lady behind me. From that moment Charles I, about whom I then knew nothing, for I had only got as far as Richard I, became my favourite king in history.

“After those two summers I never saw the Duchess again until I grew up, except once,

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

when I was ten years old, living in London because I was too ill to go to school. Then she came to tea with her governess. Outside the short November day was fading to a close. I lay upon a sofa, watching the gale blow about the tops of the plane trees, listening to the patter of the rain on the window and feeling very small and lonely. The door was thrown open and a lady came in with a little girl. It was over three years since I had seen her, an age in a child's life, and in the dim light I hardly knew her for a moment. She was taller and paler and darker than I remembered. But her charm was the same: the drowsy caressing voice, the slow sweet smile, the delicious gurgle of laughter, the soft eyes glowing with sympathy as she leant forward in the firelight; they had not altered. At the first silvery words all my depression fell from me. And when she went I felt it worth being ill a thousand times over so to be visited."

This conquest was not the only one made in these early days, for it was at Lady Leicester's party that the Duke of York first saw his future wife, and amidst all the distractions of crackers and iced cakes, the little girl—then aged five—

## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

made so deep an impression that at their first grown-up meeting, about thirteen years later, he immediately recognised her.

Besides these occasional weeks in London the routine of the Duchess's life was several times joyfully interrupted by visits to Italy, where she went to stay at the Villa Capponi with Lady Strathmore's beautiful mother, Mrs. Scott. The Duchess vividly remembers the thrill of night travel and restaurant-car meals, and at the end of the journey the glamour of being "abroad," the gabble and gesticulations of foreigners, and all the colour and beauty of this Italian home. No wonder, for her grandmother's garden, glowing in Southern sunshine, was a dream of loveliness, with magnificent cypresses standing out against the blue distant mountains behind Fiesole and, immediately below, the City of Florence with Giotto's famous tower.

Inside everything was in perfect harmony with the surroundings, and one can imagine how impressive to a child must have been the great room with an organ at one end, a fire-place in the centre and dark panelled walls—a stately solemn room, yet full of comfort and brightness. Lovely

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

furniture, flowers, books, beauty everywhere. And the little chapel with its few exquisite pictures, and walls covered with red damask.

Good as it was to go abroad, it was equally delightful to return to her English or her Scottish home, in neither of which was life ever dull. For though "the Benjamins" of the Bowes-Lyon family were so inseparable, they were by no means left to themselves, being amply provided with attentive elder brothers and sisters, in all of whose interests the Duchess was absorbed.

To the child of seven years old the marriage of her eldest brother Lord Glamis to the Duke of Leeds' daughter, Lady Dorothy Osborne, came as a great excitement. "Me and Dorothy's little brother are going to be bridesmaids," she wrote.

Two years later there was another family wedding, when the eldest daughter, Lady Mary, married Lord Elphinstone, and the Duchess, in a Romney frock, was again bridesmaid.

There still remained one unmarried sister, and of her much-appreciated companionship the Duchess was not deprived for many years, for it was not until 1916 that Lady Rose married

## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

Mr. Leveson-Gower. She tells me: "Elizabeth was an ideal younger sister: always original and amusing and, as now, full of fun or sympathy—whichever you happened to need at the moment."

Early supplied with a bevy of nephews and nieces, the Duchess always showed great talent for aunthood. As instructress in the art of making daisy chains, organiser of hide-and-seek, promotor of make-believe and dressing-up, Aunt "Elizabuff" reigned supreme.

Also as possessor of pets, for, as well as birds, she kept rabbits, frogs, chickens, goats, tortoises, and pigs. Aunts who keep pigs are by no means common, and the nephews and nieces were duly grateful.

In her own early childhood she was never in want of occupation. That bored cry of, "What can we do now?" never distressed the ears of attendants. Able to make her own fun, she needed no jaded slaves of the lamp.

When she was quite small she liked dolls, but they needed to have eyes that would shut and hair that could stand rather ostentatious brushing.



## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

As soon as she could read she gobbled books, and her nurse tells me she remembers elbows perpetually rough and red from excessive reading on the floor.

Though now an ardent and good tennis player, she was as a child more addicted to climbing trees and running races than to orthodox games, and golf held no charms for her. Riding she loved, and at a very early age was allowed to trot about on "Bobs" by herself. In a scarlet habit, proudly waving to all she met, she was a familiar figure on this minute pony.

On wet days the family dressing-up chest was an unfailing resource, as it was not only full of costumes of the periods between James I and George IV, but also held a wonderful variety of wigs.

But probably in all weathers and at all times her favourite occupation was making friends. At this pastime she was so successful that visitors, pretending to be superstitious, used by miscounting to make Lady Strathmore believe her party to be thirteen in number so that the little Lady Elizabeth should come down to luncheon to make fourteen. "How many will



## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

there be in the dining-room?" the butler asked one day. "Fourteen if you count I," answered Lady Elizabeth.

Here, before leaving the Duchess's early childhood, I will insert a description of her and her family by Lord Gorell.

## A REMEMBRANCE

"It is quite twenty-one years since I first was enslaved by the charms of little Lady Elizabeth Lyon: she had just attained the fascinating age of six, and she took my heart by storm even as she has since taken by storm the hearts of the whole British people. It was no exceptional conquest on her part; she had a way with her, even so long ago, which made slaves of all her acquaintance. But after a few days' preliminary shyness, during which the stranger was gazed at solemn-eyed as a probationer, she discovered that he had a certain faculty for nonsense, and she invested him accordingly with the honours of her confidence, soon reaching to the stage when she was sufficiently sure of her power imperiously to command her youngest brother, David, then aged four, not to bother 'me,' with

the unconcealed object of clearing him out of the way in order to 'bother' me all by herself. Two years later she confided to me that 'she was sure she had bothered me awfully' when she was six.

"That was not a fear that she need ever have entertained: there are children, of course, who bother grown-ups; but Lady Elizabeth was never one of them. To every lover of children she had about her that indefinable charm that bears elders irresistibly into fairyland. In the simplest and most unconscious way she was all-conquering. In addition to the charm of especially winsome childhood, she had, even then, that blend of kindness and dignity that is the peculiar characteristic of her family. She was small for her age, responsive as a harp, wistful and appealing one moment, bright-eyed and eager the next, with a flashing smile of appreciative delight, an elfin creature swift of movement—the vision of her little figure tripping across to the sundial on the lawn in front of the grim, old, haunted Scottish castle of Glamis remains with me as a wonderful study in contrasts—quick of intelligence, alive with humour, able

## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

to join in any of the jokes and hold her own with the jokers, and touchingly and sometimes amusingly loyal to her friends. Once, when a comic corrupting of names was going on among the house-party, proceeding from the innocuous to the opprobrious until mine had descended to 'Mr. Abominable,' Lady Elizabeth promptly took up the cudgels in defence of her defamed cavalier (whom privately she was wont to order about under the title of 'old boy'), and from 'Mr. Nice' soon arrived by a process of transmutations all her own at 'Mr. Remarkable' which gave her great content.

"To remember her at Glamis is to remember her in the very happiest of settings. She and David were the two small children of a large and wholly delightful family, and it is a marvel that they were never, either of them, in the very least degree spoilt. No house-parties were ever so altogether friendly as those of the summer holidays at Glamis some twenty years ago, when the boys were at Oxford or Eton, and all, sons and daughters alike, were young, unmarried, and at home—with the exception only of Lord Glamis, who was already in the Guards. The

ostensible reason for the assembly was cricket, jolly cricket on the castle ground or in the neighbourhood, not too serious cricket. Once a match at Arbroath depended entirely on the ability of Fergus, a great wag as well as a dear and gallant fellow, but no cricketer, to achieve the unusual and make a run, and amidst cheers for once he managed a fluke shot: on another occasion against Brechin, the castle side had eight runs to make to win and six wickets in hand: 'Uncle Pat,' Lord Strathmore's brother, who was out, even then refused to be confident of victory until we all declared that if we were beaten he would be justified in his pessimism for ever—and we actually lost by four runs! Yet another year, Brechin, always our most dour opponents, won by one wicket, the last run being obtained daringly off a catch in the slips—dropped of course in the tension! There was always incident and excitement in plenty over cricket at Glamis: once we all subscribed for a Panama hat for our captain, Lord Strathmore, in honour of his doing the 'hat-trick' against the Dundee Drapers.

"And then when this serious-non-serious cricket was over for the day, came cricket again

## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

in the evening, very serious indeed, with Elizabeth and David in rivalry for the perpetual right to bat.

"In between our matches were days on the moors after grouse and black-cock, and other days of picnic, nominally rest days, when Elizabeth would sally forth bestriding an aged donkey, reputed to be at Glamis for a quiet end, and the unfortunate slaves on foot, to please their imperious and delighted little mistress of the ceremonies, instead of sauntering leisurely along beside her as they had planned to do, had to run breathlessly at her stirrup and then exert all their tired muscles to prevent donkey and rider from plunging, with shrieks of joy from the latter, headlong into the stream.

"And the evenings also were young and joyous; some wonderful dressings-up were devised, as when Alec in charades brought the house down as the 'great gulf' fixed between Heaven and Hell. Lady Mary's birthday came at the end of August, and that was hailed by her brothers as an opportunity for comic speechmaking, Jock replying on her behalf with sallies that called for her amused indignation, and Fergus

for the ladies, to the laughter of all—after which Elizabeth, sitting up late in honour of the occasion, would consent very sleepily to be taken up to bed.

“Such was her environment, in the midst of her brothers and sisters, all on the very happiest terms together at Glamis—a great and historic house, no stiffness, no aloofness anywhere, no formality except the beautiful old custom of having the two pipers marching round the table at the close of dinner, followed by a momentary silence as the sound of their bagpipes died away gradually in the distance of the castle. It was all so friendly and so kind, days of such whole-hearted delightful youth under the gracious guidance of Lady Strathmore, kindest and most understanding of hostesses, and the old castle re-echoed with fun and laughter. No wonder little Elizabeth came up to me once as my visit was nearing its end and demanded, ‘But why don’t you *beg* to stay?’

“These days are gone, as Alec and Fergus are gone. We are all older, married and dispersed: little Elizabeth Lyon is Duchess of York and the idol of the nation, her smile the cherished

## HOW HER EARLY YEARS WERE SPENT

possession of everyone whose eyes rest upon her for a moment as she passes on her royal road. An unspoilt bringer of happiness, she is fulfilling her widespread, public responsibilities of to-day with the same infectious and responsive charm as was peculiarly her own in the days of her childhood—and the Princess Elizabeth is there to grow from infancy into just such another as her mother was. But the remembrance is with me unchangeably of a gracious, happy family, loving and loved, and of a little fairy playmate whose companionship was a dancing magic from which all who were honoured by it can never again be free: they are enslaved for always and happy in their bonds.”





Chapter IX  
*THE OUTBREAK OF WAR*



## CHAPTER IX

### THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

FOR thirteen years the Duchess of York's life was undisturbed by Fate. Her childhood was a tranquil spell of time, spent in the haven of home, serenely building the boat in which some day to embark on the open seas.

Few families can have enjoyed securer, pleasanter harbourage than hers; until History reasserted itself: the violent kind of history which no doubt the Duchess then thought safely confined to History Books. The world-storm swept away the breakwaters of privilege, and the private barques, floating on untroubled home waters, were torn from their moorings and swirled into the surrounding seas.

On the evening of her fourteenth birthday the Duchess went to one of the largest theatres in London. This birthday treat was one which she will never forget, for it was the 4th August, 1914, and from the theatre-box she watched with her mother and her brothers a crowd gone mad with excitement at the Declaration of War.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Then followed those first days of bewildering strangeness and wild enthusiasm. For everyone there was an end to normal life, but some were so circumstanced that for a time they remained mere spectators. To them the war, however thrilling, seemed a fantastic cataclysm in which they were not actually involved. History had not yet invaded their private life, and the illusion of personal immunity dies hard. But for the Lyon family there was no such postponement. To them, from the outset, the War came as a convincing reality. There were four brothers of an age at which there could be no hesitation, and within the first few days those four brothers, Patrick, John, Michael and Fergus, had all joined the army.

The Duchess tells me how vividly she remembers the thrill of those first days of upheaval, the complete collapse of schoolroom routine and "the bustle of hurried visits to chemists for outfits of every sort of medicine and to gunsmiths to buy all the things that people thought they wanted for a war and then found they didn't."

A week later she went up to Glamis, which

## THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

was already being converted into a hospital. Strangely silent the castle must have seemed compared with the cricketing Augusts. Four absent brothers leave a great emptiness and for the first time there was no elder sister, for Lady Rose was training in a London hospital.

The billiard-table was piled high with "comforts"; thick shirts and socks, mufflers, body-belts and sheepskin coats to be cut out and treated with some kind of varnish.

The Duchess tells me: "Lessons were neglected, for during these first few months we were so busy knitting, knitting, knitting and making shirts for the local battalion—the 5th Black Watch. My chief occupation was crumpling up tissue paper until it was so soft that it no longer crackled, to put into the lining of sleeping-bags."

Then in December she remembers going out one day to the village shop, not as usual, in search of bull's-eyes, but to buy unaccustomed things—Woodbines and Gold Flake and Navy Cut. The first batch of wounded were expected from the hospital in Dundee.

For the first time in her life the Duchess spent

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Christmas at Glamis, and in the Castle Crypt a circle of wounded soldiers stood round a great dark, resinous tree, its foot concealed by parcels, its branches stretching widely to the high bare walls of grey stone, and its hundred flickering candles reflected in the shining breastplates of the knights in armour.

From that first War Christmas until 1919, the trim white beds, arranged in ordered rows, along the panelled walls of the huge dining-room, were never unoccupied.

It was not long before all four brothers were "somewhere in France." A heavy weight of dread lay on the Strathmores, and they were not destined to be spared the realisation of their fears.

In September 1915, Fergus was killed at Loos. Early in 1917 his younger brother Michael was taken prisoner and reported killed. For a long time he was too ill to communicate with his family, and they believed him dead. The camp in which he was imprisoned was one of the worst, and his sufferings were very great. When he returned at the end of the War, he did not



THE DUCHESS DRESSED UP FOR A CHARADE IN ONE OF THE  
COSTUMES OUT OF THE OLD CHEST AT GLAMIS





## THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

tell his family that he had given up his turn to go to Holland in favour of a badly wounded brother officer: thus indefinitely prolonging his own ordeal. This fact Lord Strathmore learnt long afterwards from another prisoner.



Chapter X  
*GLAMIS AS A HOSPITAL*



## CHAPTER X

### GLAMIS AS A HOSPITAL

SOLDIERS going into action would have done wisely to label themselves "To Glamis Castle." Among all the big country houses converted into hospitals, none can have provided a more peaceful parenthesis between the sufferings of the past and the menace of the future.

Run with the minimum of red tape, it was the only hospital in which there were no regulations as to "bounds" and hours. The patients were treated neither as children nor as prisoners, but as privileged guests, and the confidence placed in them was always justified. In this hospital there was never any "trouble." Lady Rose, who after her training in the London hospital took complete charge, with a gentle and efficient "Sister"; and every member of her family contended with one another in efforts to make the men feel at home.

Their efforts appear to have been crowned with success, at any rate with the sergeant who said to a visitor: "My three weeks at Glamis

have been the happiest I ever struck. I love Lady Strathmore so very much on account of her being so very like my dear mother, as was; and as for Lady Elizabeth, why, she and my fiancay are as like as two peas."

Wrapped in blankets, their kit gone, their uniforms ragged, torn away and cut from their wounds by the doctors, the first party of men came in the winter time. Scarcely caring where they were going, they arrived dazed and exhausted by their long journey, each bringing his own account of the particular corner of hell in which he suffered.

Those who were not bedridden ate their meals in the great stone Crypt, and some were at first a little awed by those ghostly soldiers of other days, the men in armour, burnished sentinels standing at perpetual attention against the grim bareness of the walls.

But timidity soon melted, and the guests became at ease, both with the owners of the house and with its reputed ghosts, and those who were well enough to fling themselves into all the entertainment provided, came near to forgetting unforgettable things. In fine weather they explored



SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD





the Castle grounds, or went for long, soothing motor drives in beautiful country the peacefulness of which made War recede into unreality.

Indoors they endangered the cloth on the billiard-table or, to Lady Rose's accompaniment, lustily sang: "We don't want to lose you," "The Sunshine of your Smile," "A little grey home in the West," and many other favourites, the half-tender, half-derisive songs of those tuneful years.

And all day long in the huge ward they smoked and wrote letters, wrestled with jig-saw puzzles, played Patience and chaffed their nurses. And in the evening when it was cold and dark outside, and the lights glowed in the ward, and great armfuls of logs blazed up the chimney, and the iron-studded door had creaked to and fro for the last time, and all of them were in; then the small tables were drawn up and rubbers of whist were played.

It was at this time that Lady Elizabeth used to come down to play with the soldiers, and the nurses tell me how each one of them hoped she would sit at his table and share in his game, and how occasionally there were words because some aspirants thought others unfairly pushing. And

often, in the touchingly fresh voice of her fourteen years, she would sing "Strawberry Fair," "I have a song to sing O!" and other old-fashioned melodies.

She was, of course, far too young to be officially enrolled as a member of the Hospital staff, but besides entertaining the soldiers she was allowed to undertake all sorts of odd duties in scullery, pantry, and ward.

Her unremitting ambition was to put the soldiers at their ease—to disperse the inevitable preliminary shyness.

One day she dressed her brother David—then aged 12—as a lady in cloak, skirt, veils, furs, and a becoming hat, and took him all round the ward, introducing him as her cousin. David asked the men all those questions that bright ladies used to ask wounded soldiers, and they thought him a very charming lady, and were not undeceived until he told them on the following day.

During the Christmas holidays the Hospital was especially gay. There were formal whist-drives with much preparation beforehand, prizes set out for the winners, a bunch of flowers on

each little table; the nurses superlatively starched, and the men aggressively clean with boots like looking-glasses. When the prizes had been presented the competitors would dance or blacken their faces, dress up in borrowed garments—skirts and feathers—and to the music of numerous mouth-organs, march to the village, singing through the keen, windy darkness of the avenue. There were frequent expeditions into Forfar to see the movies, and some to the pantomime in Dundee with the long drive home at night across the Sidlaws, the car lamps searching along the white road across which rabbits scudded like phantoms.

Once, to the great interest of the British Army, a party of New Zealand and Maori soldiers arrived to be shown over the Castle by Lady Elizabeth, who answered all their questions and nearly drowned them in tea.

Periodically came the terribly painful breaks when convalescence was declared over and the soldiers had to leave to make way for a new party of wounded. Then there would be a farewell supper with speeches and flashlight photographs, crackers, caps, mottoes, mouth-organs

and a special present for each man—a fountain-pen perhaps, or a writing-case, some such small, tangible reminder of the haven he was leaving. On these tense evenings there was, of course, always a ceaseless barrage of jokes, but lumps in the throat grew painful.

With agonised blots the outgoing soldiers wrote their names in the big leather-bound visitors' book, and, as they said "Goodbye," most of the men gave to the Duchess their special "souvenirs"; bullets, shell-cases, or little pieces of shrapnel, and to each the expression in her eyes said, "Soldier, I wish you well."

And so they went back to become as mere drops in one wave of the sea, and some of them never wrote, and some wrote often, and some still write to-day. And the motors that carried them back to Dundee brought others to fill their place, strangers to be made friends with, men and boys, English, Scotch, and Irish; some gassed, some convalescent, but all with the strange initiated look of men who have been in action.

And again all day the gramophone brayed out its tunes, and whist battles raged, and there were dances and concerts, and when the lights went

out in the ward, each new party of soldiers told one another ghost stories. Sometimes there were hideous rat-hunts in the Crypt with sticks, and fierce war-cries, and a kill, and always much attention was paid to some perverse brown hens, Rhode Island Reds, lodged in one of the dis-used towers. In the belief that they would appreciably lessen the war-time shortage by producing unheard-of quantities of eggs, these hens were given immense quantities of food. They seemed very grateful for their meals, but there the matter ended.

Thus month after month, through good and bad news, the Hospital was kept open to relays of soldiers. And as the War was still "going very tough" and food had become scarce, to the horror of the one remaining gardener, flocks of sheep, munching as they moved, were encouraged to wander over the wide, once well-kept lawns.

During these years it is difficult to believe that the Duchess's lessons can have been very serious or regular. Her schoolroom was high up the winding, grey stone staircase, and its windows looked out across the courtyard where the bell clanged cheerfully for Chapel and for meals.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

With so many relations and friends at the front, it was scarcely possible not to wait about for the postman. Far away he could be seen, toiling down the long straight avenue to the village, and the soldiers remember the Duchess waiting for him every morning, either on the grey stone steps or by the cannon, a small, eager figure against the sombre, iron-studded door, and watching her every movement, Peter, her black satin Cocker, waited with her.

When B.E.F. envelopes had been torn open and letters read, there would be parcels of "comforts" to be sent off. And perhaps as soon as lessons had started, a hum would be heard in the distance, and governess and pupil would race to the top of the Tower, where the wind blew in a gale, tugging at the flag, and from there they would watch the high aeroplane that seemed so tiny a thing to make so loud a noise. It could be seen for a long time until it was lost in the mist of the Grampians, and as they watched they were so stirred by the audacity of Man and the thought of the crisis through which he was now passing, that it became difficult to turn their

minds away from their contemporaries back to the early Britons or Attila's Huns.

And up the winding staircase all day long, confusing thoughts which were not very concentrated, quavered the music of the gramophone, softened by distance, but still strident: "Goodbye, Dolly, I must leave you," "Tipperary," or the irresistible voice of George Robey, oddly choked and muffled.

And often the light, scuffling steps of a child of five years old were heard, and, with a whisk of his kilt, in darted the Master of Glamis, escaped from his nurse and commanding "Aunt Elizabuff" to be "funny."

At other times there were other steps, also hurrying, but heavy, creaking ones: soldiers dashing past the schoolroom door up to the flat roof with soup-plates full of salt to pour down the chimney. Such Gargantuan armfuls of logs were always being flung on the flaming grate that the chimney constantly caught fire.

This Hospital was not closed until some time after the end of the War, and all through 1917 and 1918 numbers of Australian and New Zea-

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

land officers, home on leave from the front, were also entertained at Glamis.

As a result of this hospitality, the Duchess's correspondence is still swollen, and when she landed at Wellington in New Zealand, in the forefront of the great crowd gathered to meet her, she was delighted to recognise one of the officers who had stayed for a few weeks at Glamis.



Chapter XI

*A PATIENT'S ACCOUNT OF  
GLAMIS HOSPITAL*



## CHAPTER XI

### A PATIENT'S ACCOUNT OF GLAMIS HOSPITAL

**T**O GIVE a first-hand impression of Glamis as a Castle, I will now quote from a letter written by Sergeant Pearne.

"In August 1915, I left Dundee Royal Infirmary for the Countess of Strathmore's Hospital at Glamis Castle. My right shoulder had been badly shattered and I had gone through a severe time. The doctors and nurses had done their utmost with success, and it now depended upon quietude, fresh air and plenty of good food to push me up the ladder of health again.

"When I stepped out of the Countess's car at lovely old Glamis, I was landing at the finest spot a soldier could wish for—a home from home—I stood and gazed with awe and admiration at the lovely old pile of strength, the first real castle I had ever seen, and when I left after six months' stay, I had grown to love—even to worship—dear old Glamis from the very flagstaff to the lowest step.

"In that time I spent one of the happiest peri-

ods of my life; every comfort, every care, an abundance of excellent food and nothing to do but be happy and get fat.

“Come what may, I shan’t ever forget this splendid old family, which runs back for over eight hundred years, for the very great care and many kindnesses I received from them, while living at dear old Glamis Castle.

“We slept in the beautiful dining-room converted into a ward of sixteen beds, and our dining-hall was the ancient historic Crypt, full of old battle-axes, swords, suits of armour, wild animals’ skins, etc., etc. The library and the billiard-room, with its lovely old tapestries, was set aside for our use. To be blunt, there wasn’t a wish went ungratified, and the whole family tried in every way possible to remove, for a time at least, the memories of War from their guests. Yes, Glamis Castle, though it might be, was indeed Home from Home.

“My first meeting with the Duchess of York, then Lady Elizabeth, was shortly after my arrival. I had wandered through the crypt, having a look round, and, passing into King Duncan’s chamber, I suddenly came face to face with a



*Photo by Lafayette*

THE DUCHESS JUST AFTER HER HAIR WAS PUT UP



huge brown bear, stuffed and standing on its hind legs with its mouth wide open. Of course I got a rare fright, and I must have shown it because, on looking across the room, I saw a smiling face at a little window. Not approving of anyone laughing at my expense, I scowled at this face and retreated as fast as I could. Later on that same afternoon, I was sitting just outside of the Castle, when out came a girl in a print dress and a sun-bonnet swinging in her hand. I did not know who she was, but I remembered the face and the brown bear! This was the little lady.

"She saw me sitting, hesitated, and then walked towards me. As she did so, I noticed the unconscious dignity of her carriage. She sat down and chatted to me for a good while, asking me questions about myself—hoped I liked the Castle, did my shoulder pain me, and so on.

"I answered her questions and talked to her as I would to any other girl, and I thought to myself: 'Well, you're a lady and a very charming one,' but it never dawned on me who she was.

"She had the loveliest pair of blue eyes I'd

ever seen—very expressive, eloquent eyes that could speak for themselves. She had a very taking habit of knitting her forehead just a little now and then when speaking, and her smile was a refreshment.

“I noticed in particular a sort of fringe at the front of her shapely head. Her teeth were even and very white and well set, and when speaking, she would look ever so straight at me. Altogether she struck me as being a most charming little lady and a most delightful companion.

“That night I got another shock in learning who my Lady of the afternoon really was. It was the custom when new wounded soldiers arrived for the Countess to visit the wards so that the new arrivals should get introduced. I and five others were lined up when the Countess and my young Lady of the afternoon, accompanied by the Nurse, came into the ward. I happened to be the last one to get introduced and, of course, I was all attention to what was being said before my turn came. You can imagine my feelings of embarrassment when I heard Nurse introduce the little lady I had scowled at and spoken to so free and easy as Lady Elizabeth! What an



ass I felt, and whatever would I say to her? I shook hands as nicely as I could with the Countess and mumbled out something with 'My Lady' in it, and then Nurse said 'Corporal Pearne, this is Lady ——' but Lady Elizabeth she broke in and smilingly shook hands, saying 'Oh, yes, Nurse. I know Corporal Pearne. He and I have already met. We had a chat this afternoon, didn't we?' That set me at rest again. I think she must have seen my confusion and so helped me out of it by her remarks.

"The Countess (a most sweet, motherly lady), in a beautiful, modulated voice said she welcomed us to Glamis and hoped we would be very happy. After a few minutes' talk to Nurse about our wounds, she retired and I sat down to think things over to myself.

"So that's who the young lady I had scowled at on account of the bear was, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. I knew she must be a lady of high breeding, that splendid carriage and manner, that sweet, quiet voice, that hesitating yet open manner of talking don't go for nothing. I thought what a real little brick she must be not to take

offence at my scowling and not knowing the right way to speak to a lady.

“And I thought how like her mother is to her! and as how she was a real Countess! There was no hint given as to the high rank she occupied, no swank at all, and yet there was the same dignity and unconscious grace of manner, just like Lady Elizabeth.

“I wondered how I’d get into the way of saying ‘My Lady’ and ‘Your Ladyship,’ and ‘His Lordship.’ So these were the Nobility! I wondered what the men-folk would be like. I soon found out that the whole family were all alike, the essence of politeness, a smile and a word for everyone, and not an atom of assumption, such a happy way of setting one at rest when speaking to you.

“As time rolled by and I settled down to the quiet orderly life in this lovely place, I very often had chats with my Lady Elizabeth. Sometimes I’d meet her in the lovely gardens or in the crypt. Often I’ve taken a book and gone up to the top of the Castle (a favourite haunt of mine) and found her and her governess having a breather in the lovely country air. She was al-

## A PATIENT'S ACCOUNT OF GLAMIS HOSPITAL

ways the same. 'How is your shoulder?' 'Do you sleep well?' 'Does it pain you?' 'Why are you not smoking your pipe?' 'Have you no tobacco?' 'You must tell me if you haven't and I'll get some for you.' I must add that the Countess supplied us all with tobacco and cigarettes and we often had cigars sent in to us.

"Lady Elizabeth would ask me had I heard from my parents and how were they, did I keep them well informed of the progress of my wound, and so on. She listened very interested when I told her of my work and everyday life and of my family.

"For her fifteen years she was very womanly, kind-hearted and sympathetic. She adored her parents and her home, and was devoted to her brothers and sisters. In return she was loved and adored by all. The servants and all attached to the Castle simply worshipped her. I can see her now. I'd say her sun-bonnet was more often swinging round and round by its strings than on the place for which it was made. She was very fond of cycling about the grounds, often with both her eyes tight shut I've seen her roll off, spring up, grab her sun-bonnet and jump

on again, laughing and enjoying my fright immensely.

"She loved flowers and dogs, but was terrified of a mouse, and she thought it very cruel to shoot birds.

"Often after dinner she and her governess would come into the ward and have a game of partner whist. I very often played as her partner, and when she was in doubt about what to play she would tap her forehead with a card and very often quite unwittingly expose its face, which to me was very amusing. Of course, at this time, she was just learning to play whist. When she was perplexed she would look at me and say, '*Do tell me what to play, Ernest.*' Many a happy game we had together. Her governess would jokingly say that we always won but not fairly.

"Lady Elizabeth was very fond of good music, and sang sweetly. She had a good knowledge of the different composers of music and of writers of books too. She was quick to see a joke, and didn't she laugh when I and another lad, who had one arm in a sling too, tried to carry a large tray of dishes and plates, and the whole lot of crockery got smashed to pieces on the floor.

## A PATIENT'S ACCOUNT OF GLAMIS HOSPITAL

"Taking photographs was a favourite hobby of hers, and it was the result of one of her productions that caused a little misunderstanding at my home. When my parents visited me at Dundee while I was so ill, they were warned not to be surprised should they hear that my arm had been amputated. I didn't know of this. Lady Elizabeth gave me a photograph she'd taken of me and I sent it home, not thinking that what with my right arm being in a sling, and I sitting right sideways, it didn't show at all.

"When my parents got it, they were sure my right arm was missing and I was keeping it from them. This upset them so much that I got a letter from a chum at home asking me to write and tell my parents that my arm had been amputated, for it was kinder to let them know the worst.

"I couldn't fathom the thing at all and I showed the letter to Lady Elizabeth, and she was very sorry to think my parents were worried unnecessarily, and said something must be done at once to put their minds at rest. So she wrote off straight to them saying exactly how my arm

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

was progressing and how sorry she was to think they'd been in such a taking.

"Then she sent for me to come to the garden at once to have a front view of myself photographed so my arm and the sling could be seen. This was done and a copy sent home to Mother to set her fears at rest, and she has it still and wouldn't part with it for a fortune. This incident just proves what a great interest and depth of sympathy she and her family had in their wounded guests.

"And even in deep sorrow they still had us in mind. In September 1915 one of Lady Elizabeth's brothers, Captain Fergus, of the Black Watch, came on leave from France for a few hours which was all that was granted at that time. On the Monday night before the battle of Loos, he left the Castle to return to his battalion. He was a fine gentleman and a soldier. Nothing more was heard of him and the big Battle of Loos commenced on the Thursday. Next day, Friday, news came that Captain Fergus had been killed in the taking and holding of the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

"This bombshell threw the Castle into deep





THE DUCHESS WITH HER SPANIEL IN THE GARDEN AT GLAMIS





## A PATIENT'S ACCOUNT OF GLAMIS HOSPITAL

sorrow and gloom, and us boys felt very keenly for our sweet hostess, His Lordship and family. We agreed among ourselves not to go up to the billiard-room, not to play any games on the lawns, to keep piano and gramophone subdued, and above all, not to leave or enter the Castle by the main entrance but by a side door.

"We wrote out a letter of sympathy and sent it to Her Ladyship. The next day a reply came back from Her Ladyship thanking us very much for our sympathy, and she and her husband hoped we would carry on in exactly the usual way and use the main entrance as before, as we were their guests.

"Those were sad days. To end with something funny, one red-hot day I climbed to the top of the Castle tower. Lady Elizabeth was there and we got talking about plays, and so on. The Union Jack was lying at the foot of the flagstaff. I said it would look better at the top, so we decided to haul it up. We did so, and just as it reached the top the wind entangled it over the top of the staff, and try as we might it wouldn't right itself.

"I said that it had got to be put right and

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

that I would climb up. She said, 'Oh, no! Ernest, you must not attempt such a thing. Even with two good arms, it wouldn't be safe. With one in a sling, it would be madness. You're not to do it.'

"I excused myself and said I was going to try.

"At that she stamped her little foot, and called me 'stubborn,' 'pig-headed,' 'foolhardy,' anything to stop me. Then she ran away to get some one else to prevent me. It was a difficult job, but I managed to scramble up and slide down slowly dragging the flag with me. When I descended to the crypt I met Lady Elizabeth coming back, and told her it was done. She stared at me amazed. 'Well, Ernest,' she said, 'I didn't think you could have done it! You *are* stubborn!' Yes, it was a sad day when it came to saying goodbye to her and all at dear Glamis."

Chapter XII

*THE FIRE AT GLAMIS CASTLE*



## CHAPTER XII

### THE FIRE AT GLAMIS CASTLE

**M**OST children cherish the ambition to play a distinguished part in a fire. I remember days when I used to scan the landscape for distant smoke, and in my dreams, to the deafening cheers of a crowd, swarm down a rope made of sheets knotted together, carrying a rescued child under each arm and the baby in my teeth.

If the Duchess was not destined to enjoy the supreme glamour of saving life, more fortunate than most children, she was at least privileged to play a prominent part in preserving from destruction the home that she loved.

Towards the end of 1916 there was a very bad fire at Glamis Castle. The cause of the outbreak was never discovered, but it started in one of the upper rooms of the central Keep, and the Duchess was the first to notice the smoke and sparks.

Without wasting a moment in which to tell anyone else, she immediately telephoned for the Fire Brigade. The Keep is over ninety feet high,

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

and at that height the wind was blowing strongly. The mischief spread rapidly, and before even the local Fire Brigade arrived the roof had caught fire in several places, and, besides the showers of sparks, long ribands of flame were already curling out of the thick clouds of ascending smoke.

The treacherous river Dean, taking its toll of human life, so legend says, in every seventh year, flows past the castle only a few hundred yards away.

It was a great relief to remember how close it was, but an immense length of hose was required to pump its waters up to the roof, and unfortunately the Glamis firemen had none sufficiently long. So at first very little could be done, and with increasing anxiety the family watched their threatened home. Louder and louder grew the ominous crackling, and the wind fanned the flames. The wounded soldiers were all away at a cinema, but very soon after the alarm a great, intent crowd had gathered on the lawns. Before long the engines from Forfar came galloping up, but they were not able to do much more than the local brigade.

## THE FIRE AT GLAMIS CASTLE

Fortunately the Duchess had also telephoned at once to the Dundee fire brigade and for this, their sole hope, they now waited in almost unbearable suspense.

Meanwhile from one part of the roof the defiant flames were now blazing, at times hiding the pinnacles of the lovely little towers, and in the fading light the pinkish grey stones of the Castle took on a lurid red glow reflected in the faces of the crowd. Before long a great lead tank under the roof, used for storing water, burst with the heat, and a deluge rushed flooding down the grey stone spiral staircase, threatening to do as serious damage as the flames. This fresh disaster gave the Duchess her opportunity, and the way she availed herself of it is remembered by all at Glamis. Armed with brooms, she and her brother and several others under their direction stood on the stairs, diverting the torrent from surging in at the drawing-room door, and sweeping it forward and downward to the lower, wider regions of the staircase where it could escape innocuously into the stone halls and passages below. She then arranged about thirty people in a long queue, and pictures, furniture

and other valuables were thus passed from hand to hand down the stairs and carried out of danger.

"It was her little Ladyship told us how to do it and kept us to it," said a tenant when he was thanked for his services.

After what seemed an eternity the longed-for engines arrived from Dundee. Wild cheers greeted them. At first even their efforts seemed unavailing, and there was an agonising wait, but at last it became clear that the torrents drawn from the river were defeating the fire, and before night fell the flames had been reduced to smouldering smoke.

The extent of the damage was great. To repair it an immense amount of work was needed, and it is only within the last few months that it has been finished.

On the night of this memorable fire Lady Elizabeth was toasted with "Highland Honours" in every house and cottage for miles around.

To find the exception that proves the rule is a fascinating search. Much has been said about the Duchess's unfailing courtesy, and we are



## THE FIRE AT GLAMIS CASTLE

glad to hear that in this emergency she, for once, failed to be exquisitely polite. She was too busy. A gaping spectator, making no attempt to be useful, not knowing who she was, kept bothering her with questions. "How had the fire started?" "Whose fault was it?" "Which member of the family slept in which room?" etc., etc.

"I've no time to make conversation!" Lady Elizabeth exclaimed. Unwonted asperity was in her voice and the loungee withdrew discomfited. "Who's yon prood lassie?" he ruefully enquired.



Chapter XIII  
*GROWING UP*



## CHAPTER XIII

### GROWING UP

THE coming of Peace brought no immediate outward change to the Strathmores' lives. For some months they continued to entertain Australian and New Zealand officers who, for various reasons, were unable to return to their far-distant homes. The Hospital, too, remained full until late in 1919, and long after the last of the wounded had said goodbye, the Duchess went on helping the soldiers by finding them work and assisting their families through the difficult days of demobilisation. Nor was her own anxiety ended by the Armistice. For many months there was the suspense of waiting for the repatriation of Captain Michael Bowes-Lyon who, as has already been said, had for two years been a prisoner in Germany. His health had greatly suffered, and now, when delay seemed so unnecessary, it was very hard to have the longed-for meeting indefinitely postponed.

All the time, by twos and threes, prisoners were returning home; but for the Strathmores

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

the disappointing weeks dragged on without any certain news. At last, one evening in February 1919, notice suddenly came, and there was only just time to dash to the station to welcome the returning soldier.

For his family, in a sense, it was the arrival of that long-awaited train, rather than the Armistice, that ended the War.

For them, as for nearly every family, there were gaps no peace could fill—wounds not to be healed by time: but if life could never be the same again, at least the ordeal of suspense was over. Though recovery was impossible, for the courageous convalescence now became a duty.

You could no longer insulate yourself in an island of time called "the duration of the War." The emptied Future had to be faced. It was necessary to make the best of what was left, to try to reinvest interest and hope—above all to assist surviving youth to its birthright of happiness.

The Duchess was then eighteen years old. In spite of her inherent gaiety, it is not surprising that she was in many ways serious and thoughtful for her age. It must be remembered that she



*Photo by Bedford Lemere*

A MINIATURE PAINTED BY MABEL HANKEY IN 1919





## GROWING UP

had never known the irresponsibility of that sheltered routine which is the lot of most school-girls of to-day, for she had never been away from home, but had always lived in the most intimate association with her parents and their large and exceptionally united family, sharing in all the excitements, pleasures and griefs of the grown-up life around her.

After her sister Lady Rose's marriage in 1916, as the only unmarried daughter, she became her mother's right hand, sharing all the duties as well as all the anxieties of those very difficult years.

Most privileged girls pass their years between fourteen and seventeen in equipping themselves for the future, preparing for life rather than living it. Reality scarcely claims them.

But for those whose girlhood coincided with the years of the War, such postponement of experience was impossible.

On so responsive a nature as Lady Elizabeth's the inevitable effect of the War, with its intimate personal sorrow and the sense of universal suffering, was to deepen her natural well-spring of sympathy and to intensify her sense of obligation

towards others. Passing from childhood to girlhood at a period when sacrifice was an everyday virtue, and work of some sort a matter of course, her own enjoyment never seemed—as it may to the careless young—the most important concern in life.

Her natural sense of responsibility—a cheerful, not a self-righteous one—was fostered both by her upbringing and by the War. A sense of responsibility is undeniably a burden, and the fact that she never tried to shift any weight from her young shoulders explains why, at the age of eighteen, for all its gaiety, the observant saw on her face a look of experience beyond her years.

“Coming out” is a funny expression. It suggests something deliberately abrupt, a metamorphosis, as though a chrysalis were expected to try its wings at a word of command.

For girls of the War generation there was no official “coming out.” They did not make one long stride from schoolroom to ballroom. There was no presentation, no one momentous occasion. It would be difficult to say in which month Lady

## GROWING UP

Elizabeth Lyon was accounted "grown up." Life was then too informal. Even fashion contributed to the fusion between the different ages. The era of short skirts had begun, and girls of the day were denied a thrill their mothers and elder sisters knew—the thrill of hearing, as it followed you downstairs, the swish and rustle of your first long dress, the outward and audible symbol of new dignities and potentialities.

Towards the end of the War, Lady Elizabeth was gradually seen more in London, chaperoned either by her mother or her sister Lady Elphinstone. The fringe of her childhood still remained, but the long thick plait had now become a close brown knot.

Gradually there were more friends, more frocks, more engagements, a fuller to-day and to-morrow.

The close circle of things intimately known expanded, the horizon widened. The Present became entrancing: the Future an iridescent shimmer.



## Chapter XIV

*1919-1922*



## CHAPTER XIV

1919-1922

THOUGH Glamis and St. Paul's Waldenbury still claimed most of her time, Lady Elizabeth now visited many country houses.

However much she appreciated new scenes, no counter-attraction ever diminished her love for the homes of her childhood. So strongly did both these familiar places appeal to her, that I doubt whether she knew which she preferred.

One glorious summer day a visitor to St. Paul's Waldenbury asked what her plans were. Gazing at the smooth lawns and bright flower borders that swept towards the gold and green of the distant avenue, she answered, "I don't know. It's very difficult to decide. You see, it's so perfect here": adding, almost with a sigh: "But Glamis is perfect too."

With whatever zest she flung herself into the gaieties of London, she never regarded time spent at home as an interval for rest and recuperation. Some girls return to their families as ships go into dock for repairs. They are tired,

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

and need a breathing space in which to retrain their beams before returning to social activities.

But to Lady Elizabeth, so far from being a place of withdrawal, Glamis was the spot where life was most fully lived. It was not in her nature to economise vitality, to save it up for special occasions.

Ungrudging of her time and her energy, she was always ready to spend herself without stint, never "too tired" or "too busy" to respond to any claim.

The gay energy with which she ran the Forfarshire Girl Guides is wistfully remembered. As District Commissioner of Glamis and Eassie Parish, she formed the local association. She still takes an active interest in these guides, but the encouragement of her constant fellowship is much missed. "The Duchess used to make it all such fun."

It is not possible to give more than a very brief record of these years of the Duchess's life, but a few incidents may be mentioned. During the early part of 1919 she was in London, where a surface cheerfulness was blossoming into page-



ants and processions. She was an interested spectator of President Wilson's triumphant drive and of Marshal Foch's great ovation, and, from a window in the City, she watched the first post-war Lord Mayor's Show.

At the end of April she went to stay at Althorp to be bridesmaid to her great friend Lady Lavinia Spencer, who was married in the village church to Lord Annaly.

May, June, and July, Lady Elizabeth was in London, eagerly enjoying the excitement of making new friends at dinners and dances and, for the first time in her life, going to nearly as many theatres as she liked.

In the ballroom she was as much appreciated as she had been at the children's parties, and soon established the reputation of being "the best dancer in London."

Very often she used to motor down to Eton and spend happy afternoons with her brother, never forgetting to bring him an "Angel Cake," his favourite addition to tea.

She remembers a day of brilliant sunshine at Ascot, and there are many who recall seeing her

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

there in a white lace frock and a hat with a distinct tendency to become a poke bonnet.

Most of her Sundays were spent in the green quiet of St. Paul's Waldenbury.

Though London had been great fun, when August came it was delightful to get into the night train and be rushed up to beloved Glamis, where there were hard tennis courts, a Scotch garden at its best, and old and new friends coming to stay.

Early in 1920 the house in St. James's Square was reluctantly given up. It was difficult to find a suitable substitute, and it was not until October that her parents finally decided upon 17 Bruton Street. Even then there were many alterations to be made, and the house was for months in the hands of workmen.

There was much entertaining at Glamis that autumn; and a large party was given for the Forfar Ball. Lady Rose came home for some months from Malta, where her husband was stationed, and all the old gaieties were revived—singing, dancing, and dressing-up. Many have a vivid recollection of how lovely Lady Elizabeth

looked one night in a rose brocade Vandyck dress with pearls in her hair.

At the end of August the Duke of York paid his first visit to Glamis, and there was a large party to meet him.

During his visit Princess Mary, who was reviewing Girl Guides, came over to Glamis several times from Cortacy, where she was staying with Lady Airlie.

At Christmas there was a family party at St. Paul's Waldenbury: no idle time for so conscientious an aunt as Lady Elizabeth, for the house swarmed with appreciative nephews and nieces.

In the spring there was Princess Mary's wedding, and in the Abbey, where at the next great pageant she was to be the central figure, Lady Elizabeth made one of the silver and white bridesmaids.

That same month she paid her first visit to Paris, staying at the British Embassy with her friend Diamond Hardinge. In brilliant spring sunshine, Paris was at its best and there was much to enjoy; sight-seeing, shopping, drives to Fontainebleau and Malmaison. A big ball was

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

given at the British Embassy, and I have found a letter written at the time which gives a description of the Duchess that night: "At last night's ball the rooms were perfect, and there were lots of pretty people in lovely gowns. The most charming sight there was Lady Elizabeth Lyon, a bewitching little figure in rose colour, which set off her lovely eyes and dark eyebrows to perfection. She seemed to me the incarnation of fresh, happy, English girlhood: so bright, so natural, with an absolutely enchanting smile and a look of indescribable goodness and sweetness, shot with a delicious gleam of humour and fun. Looking at her I felt that she was just what should result from her sort of home atmosphere of family affection and fun, laughter and music, and yet with a sense of the deep eternal realities of life as foundations to it all. That would account for the thoughtful look on the brow, the quiet inner radiance that her little face wears in repose, though superficially it would appear all sparkle and girlish fun. Certainly last night she stood out as an English rose, sweet and fresh as if with the dew still on it."

The second visit to Paris in June 1922 was a

very different one. Diamond Hardinge, whose death in 1922 was so deeply mourned by the Duchess and many other devoted friends, was very ill after a serious operation. Cancelling all her engagements, the Duchess went out to her friend, and through a very trying time her presence was the greatest support.

The summer of 1921 was difficult for Lady Elizabeth. Her mother had been very ill in the spring, and though it was thought that the summer at Glamis would restore her health, she grew worse, and for the time being became a complete invalid. Glamis was almost continuously full of guests, and the whole responsibility of entertaining them fell upon Lady Elizabeth. It was during this time that both the Queen and the Duke of York came to stay. Undismayed, Lady Elizabeth proved herself a perfect hostess.

In the autumn Lady Strathmore had to undergo an operation which caused her family the deepest anxiety. The strain was prolonged, for it was not until after a second operation in May 1922 that she began really to recover. During the whole of that winter and spring Lady Elizabeth was anchored by duties to Glamis. All

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

speaking in the highest praise of the remarkable, cool efficiency with which she managed everything in the huge establishment, simultaneously winning her spurs as housekeeper and hostess.

The success with which she coped with certain serious domestic crises, proved the iron determination which is to some extent camouflaged by her manner and smile. Whatever she undertakes is carried off with a gaiety and cordiality which cloaks the strength of her personality. But although she may fight with masked batteries, her purpose is nearly always fulfilled.

Chapter XV  
*HOW HER FRIENDS SAW HER*





## CHAPTER XV

### HOW HER FRIENDS SAW HER

IT IS not surprising that the Duchess should have made and kept a large number of devoted friends. Besides her great charm and capacity for fun, she has the precious gift of making whoever is with her feel at their best, and this is a gift which never goes unappreciated.

She has another great qualification for friendship. Many women are amusing: some are discreet. Very few are both. It is the rare alliance of these two qualities that the Duchess's friends find so invaluable.

In a letter one of her best friends gives some impressions of the Duchess and life at Glamis.

"After the Duchess grew up there were memorable parties at Glamis. The guests proposed themselves and, however unexpected, were welcomed by the family whose everyday life supplied ample entertainment for all who came.

"In the evening, whenever possible, Lady Strathmore was persuaded to play the piano, and the beautiful 15th-century drawing-room would

be dimly lit, except for the pool of light made by the candles on the instrument, which illuminated the serene countenance of Lady Strathmore and the eager faces of those around her. On these occasions we would all sing, and topical songs which could be adapted to some person present were very popular. The Duchess's adaptations to suit the characters of her friends were excellent.

"With their great affection and tolerant good-humour, they were a delightful family to stay with: never unduly critical of the stranger within their gates, and wonderfully unruffled by circumstances, accepting and adapting any untoward incident as a further contribution to their own humorous edition of life. The power the Duchess has of calm self-control and unruffled serenity in facing the trivial harassing disturbances of existence helps her in times of real stress.

"I met her for the first time soon after she came out. I had already heard much about her charm, and looked forward to meeting her. She arrived in the afternoon at the house where I was staying, and I found her standing alone in front

of the great Tudor fire-place—the rest of the party were out.

“She looked very pretty, and wore a hat with the faintest suggestion of a poke bonnet about it, and a ribbon under her chin. She always said the ribbon was to prevent her hat blowing off motoring, but I thought the head-dress was sufficiently becoming to be kept in constant use without the excuse of utility. At this, my first meeting, I felt at once the intense desire to please her, which I believe is universal among those in her company.

“She always has been, and is, a remarkably good friend; as incapable of an ungracious word as she is of an ungraceful movement, and though she can express opinions very trenchantly and has a great love of argument, her manner is always gentle and disarming. Her presence is heartening to a degree. Those she is with feel themselves all they would wish to be. If the desire of their heart is to be witty, they become scintillating. Whatever way they wish to succeed, when with her, they feel successful. In large companies of the shy and silent, she will launch one of those inexhaustible topics on which

everyone wishes to talk: when discussions become exasperating, she can—with an act usually only practised to perfection by devoted Nannies, abruptly interject a remark of so arresting a character on some subject entirely remote from the one under discussion as to distract immediately and permanently the attention of all from the controversy. She has a very pretty and infectious laugh. Once before a big luncheon-party, a pompous and difficult one, she said, ‘Can you laugh?’ ‘Yes,’ answered her astonished friend. ‘Will you laugh with me at luncheon, whenever I raise my left eyebrow? Let us practise now.’ At given moments throughout that at first solemn meal her musical voice rose in seemingly natural mirth accompanied by a raucous peal of forced merriment, and all solemnity was soon at an end.

“The first time I ever went to stay at St. Paul’s Waldenbury, the Duchess and I motored from London together. The car, a stately Daimler limousine, could not have the hood lowered to let in the brilliant sunshine. The Duchess determined to make the most of the situation. Sitting bolt upright, she unfurled her umbrella, raised

## HOW HER FRIENDS SAW HER

it between us and the roof of the car, and from beneath this canopy we both bowed and smiled to the astonished and, we hoped, delighted citizens of the Edgeware Road!

“The charming smile and gracious bow that she has since made so famous were as full of charm and grace during our pantomime performance that day as they are now, and I remembered it with amusement when I stood among the thousands who went to cheer her on her return from Australia, and watched her smiling and bowing from under an umbrella, made necessary on that day by the inclemency of the weather.”

Another friend writes of life at St. Paul's Waldenbury: “I first met the Duchess at a children's party, where we sat next to each other at tea and compared, with the solemnity of two small girls on their best behaviour, the sizes of our respective families. Seeing that she herself was the youngest but one of ten children, I have suspected since that she chose this subject of conversation as giving her an almost certain advantage over a stranger.

"It was some years before we met again, and I was invited to stay in her Hertfordshire home.

"Life at St. Paul's Waldenbury centred round the lady of the house, upon whom its whole management seemed to depend. There were her grandchildren to be amused, and the Duchess was always the devoted playmate of her nephews and nieces. There was a beautiful garden ready to be enjoyed, and plenty of work always waiting to be done in it. There were dogs to be looked after and chickens to be fed. There was a tennis court out of doors and a much-used piano within. There was no extravagance or luxury; no attempt to be modern or up to date. There was little apparent organisation, save such as secured that the humblest local engagement should be scrupulously fulfilled.

"This might be written of hundreds of other families following the self-contained round of an English country house. Yet if there be a genius for family life, it was surely found in that household. All the members of the family, whose numerical superiority had overawed me at our first meeting, were bound together by a contented and unspoiled affection that embraced also every friend who enjoyed the hospitality of the house."

Chapter XVI  
*ENGAGEMENT*





## CHAPTER XVI

### ENGAGEMENT

TOWARDS the end of 1922, Lady Elizabeth Lyon became the subject of widespread interest.

It was known that the Duke of York had fallen deeply in love with the "enchancing girl" with whom he was so often seen dancing, and it was stated that he intended to ask her to be his wife.

Conjecture was rife.

Would Lady Elizabeth feel that acceptance of the Duke's proposal would entail too great sacrifice of that independence and privacy which is the birthright of every subject? Would she be afraid to undertake a life of Royal duties? Would she decline? Would she accept?

Whatever qualms Lady Elizabeth may have felt, however great her misgivings as to her fitness to step into History: when the time for decision came, these qualms and misgivings ceased to be determining factors

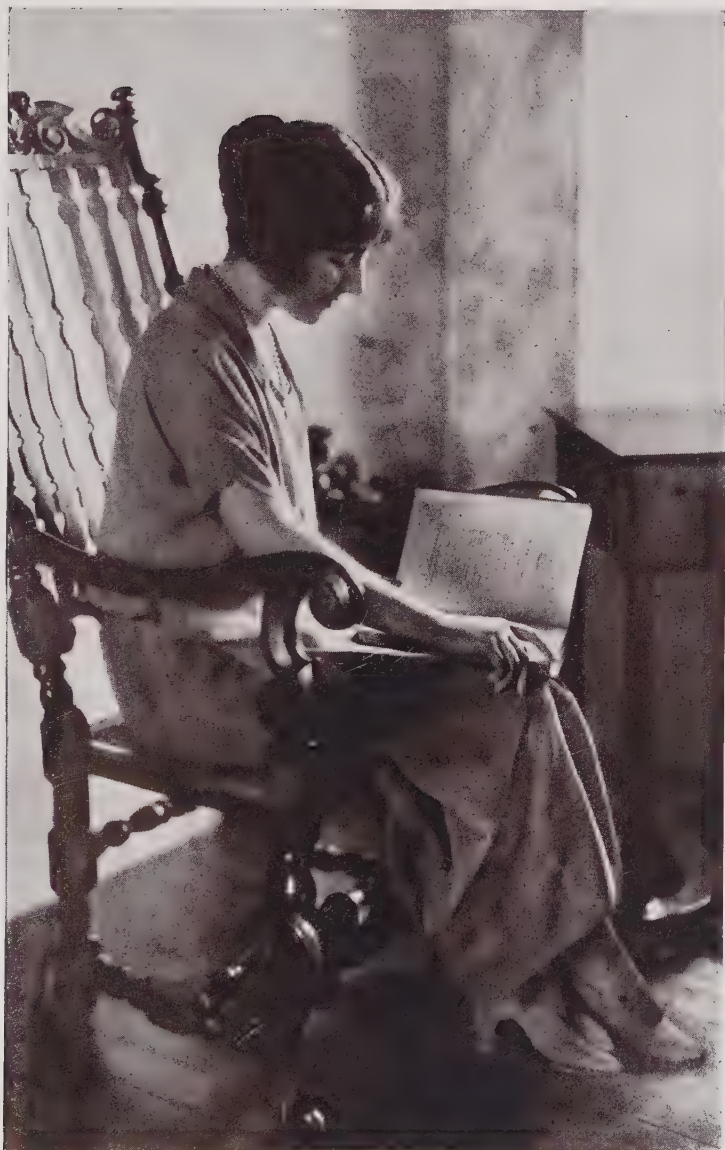
She found it was not a question of judgment,

but of impulse. Feelings, not reasons took command, and acceptance became inevitable. "I dare say she *was* very much afraid of the position, but she just found she couldn't do without him," was the explanation given me by one of her most intimate girl friends.

On Saturday, January 13th, 1923, the Duke came to stay at St. Paul's Waldenbury. The next morning he and Lady Elizabeth decided not to accompany the other members of the party to church. They preferred to walk in the beloved wood of her childhood: "THE WOOD, the haunt of Fairies," with its "moss-grown statues" and "the BIG OAK," sacred to the memory of "Caroline-Curly-Love" and "Rhoda-Wrigley-Worm."

Before they left this glamorous wood, "where the sun always seemed to be shining," the Prince had declared his suit, and the "youngest daughter" in England's latest fairy-story had joyfully consented to begin to "live happily ever afterwards." . . .

On Monday morning the Duke returned to London. Later in the same day he went to Sandringham to tell his parents of the engagement, to



*Photo by Lafayette*

A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN JUST BEFORE H.R.H.'S ENGAGEMENT



## ENGAGEMENT

which he had, of course, already obtained their provisional consent, and on the evening of January 16th the following announcement appeared in the *Court Circular*:

“It is with the greatest pleasure that the King and Queen announce the betrothal of their beloved son, the Duke of York, to the Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Strathmore, to which the King has gladly given his consent.”

The formal declaration of the King's consent to the wedding was made on the 12th February, when the following document was signed by him at a special Meeting of the Privy Council, a procedure necessitated by the Royal Marriage Act of 1772:

“Whereas by an Act of Parliament entituled ‘An Act for the better regulating the future Marriages of the Royal Family,’ it is amongst other things enacted “that no descendant of the body of His late Majesty King George II, Male or Female, shall be capable of contracting matri-

mony without the previous consent of His Majesty, His Heirs or Successors, signified under the Great Seal."

"Now know ye that we have consented and by these Presents signify Our Consent to the contracting of Matrimony between His Royal Highness Albert Frederick Arthur George, Duke of York, and the Lady Elizabeth Angela Margaret Bowes-Lyon, youngest daughter of the Rt. Honourable Claude George, Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne."

It is interesting to note that it was over two and a half centuries since a Prince in direct succession to the British Throne had received the King's consent to his marriage with a subject. Curiously enough, the last to receive that permission was also a Duke of York—the brother of Charles II, afterwards James II. He too married an Earl's daughter, Anne Hyde, daughter of the historian Clarendon.

Though Henry VIII—an exception to all matrimonial rules—was the only King of England after Edward IV married to a subject, yet during the early centuries of English history it

## ENGAGEMENT

was by no means an unusual thing for the sons and daughters of the reigning King to marry subjects. In those unsettled days, when the power of the great nobles was not yet broken, it was well worth the while of the Royal Family to seek wealth and power by alliances with some of the great noble houses. The royal coffers were often replenished through the Nevilles, Mortimers, Tudors, and other families.

But with the coming of the Hanoverians the custom of intermarriage between the Royal Family and the nobility was superseded. Amongst the many regulations brought over with George I was the rule that a Royal Prince must marry a woman of Royal rank. If he chose to marry a subject the marriage did not exist officially, and his wife and children had no position.

The first sovereign to depart from this custom was Queen Victoria, who consented to the marriage of her daughter Princess Louise to the then Marquess of Lorne, and later to that of her granddaughter, now the Princess Royal, to the Earl of Fife, whom she made a Duke at the breakfast-table. The antiquated rule that mem-



bers of the Royal House must only marry Royalties was finally abolished when the present King reverted to the ancient name of Windsor, and sweeping away all the Germanic accretions that had grown to English law, decided that Royal blood was no longer a necessity in the marriages of his younger children, and announced that they could choose their wives and husbands from the families of the first three ranks of the nobility—dukes, marquesses, and earls. Thus Princess Mary and the Duke of York were fortunate enough to be able to marry to please themselves instead of for diplomatic reasons.

To every girl the first days of her engagement are exciting days, to Lady Elizabeth they must have been more than bewildering. In a letter she wrote: "I feel very happy, but quite dazed. We hoped we were going to have a few days' peace first, but the cat is now completely out of the bag and there is no possibility of stuffing him back."

The cat was indeed out of the bag. When Lady Elizabeth motored up to London, it was to see her name blazing from every poster and to find her home in Bruton Street raided by the





THE DUCHESS WITH TWO NIECES AND A NEPHEW: THE CHILDREN OF  
LADY ELPHINSTONE



## ENGAGEMENT

Press, who continued to lay siege to it for the rest of the week.

She was at once snowed under by telegrams and letters, and from that day her post has never resumed normal dimensions.

Nearly every girl feels shy the first time she visits her future husband's family. She suffers from an uncomfortable sense of being "on approval."

To have simultaneously to pay the homage due to a Sovereign and to a father-in-law can scarcely have lessened the ordeal, and it must have been with considerable trepidation that Lady Elizabeth went to stay at Sandringham on the Sunday after her engagement; but the glowing welcome given her by the King and the Queen soon set her at her ease, and ever since then the warm affection bestowed on her by every member of the Royal Family has wonderfully smoothed for her a path which might have proved very difficult to tread.

That gentle happiness which surrounds her like an aura and diffuses itself around her, a happiness due to some inner radiance, made her a delightful acquisition to any family, and the

King and Queen rejoiced that their son was to have the invaluable help of a wife in whom beauty and charm were allied to steadfastness and ability.

It was obvious that in marrying their son she would find full scope for the exercise of these qualities, for the Duke is renowned for the unsparing way in which, without thought of self, he carries out whatever duties he feels called upon to assume. Known as the "Industrial Prince" he has well deserved his honourable title. At Cambridge he studied "Civics"—a comprehensive subject—and became especially interested in public hygiene and the welfare of youth. He is the very active President of the Industrial Welfare Society, which has been described as existing "to put oil instead of grit into the machinery of Industry," and in this capacity frequently pays informal visits to factories to inspect and study conditions, especially the arrangements for the welfare of the workers. He enjoys talking to leaders of Industry, whether employers or employed, and is an assiduous reader of periodicals and books on all labour



*Photo by Bedford Lemere*

THE DRAWING-ROOM AT 145 PICCADILLY



## ENGAGEMENT

questions, keeping a written record of anything important that he hears or reads.

In connection with the Industrial Welfare Society, he runs an annual camp of about four hundred boys, two hundred of whom are selected from the Public Schools, the other two hundred being Industrial boys.

The camp is held during the first week in August at New Romney, and each year the Duke spends some time there talking to the boys and joining in all their games and sports. This he is well qualified to do, being a fine rider, swimmer and shot, and a remarkably good tennis player.

One who has been much in his company writes: "H.R.H.'s keenness as a sportsman is most endearing. He will rise at any hour in order to procure shooting or fishing before starting the day's work, and after seven hours of official functions he will dash off to change for three hard sets of tennis before an official dinner. He likes playing with the best, and can hold his own with Wimbledon giants."

There was only a year's difference in age between the Prince of Wales and the Duke of

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

York, and the two brothers were brought up side by side, both being destined for the Navy. Many amusing anecdotes are told of the Duke's childhood. Here is an example. One day King Edward was lunching with his son and daughter-in-law. During the meal the Duke of York—then little Prince Albert—made violent attempts to attract his grandfather's attention. King Edward, who was busy talking, gently admonished his grandson for interrupting. "Don't talk, my boy, until we have finished luncheon."

The obedient boy subsided into silence.

When luncheon was over King Edward said: "Now, my dear, what is it you wanted to say to me?"

"It doesn't matter, Grandpapa," was the dejected reply. "I was only going to tell you there was a caterpillar in your salad, but you've eaten it now."

In 1909 Prince Albert entered Osborne at the age of thirteen, and followed the usual routine of a naval cadet. His war record, though well known, may be briefly repeated. At its outbreak he was serving as a midshipman in the *Collingwood* in the First Battle Squadron.





*Photo by Bedford Lemere*  
PRINCESS ELIZABETH'S NIGHT NURSERY AT 145 PICCADILLY



## ENGAGEMENT

He took part in the Battle of Jutland, and was specially mentioned in Lord Jellicoe's dispatches. Soon after this, to his great regret, a serious operation compelled him to retire from the Navy. Later he joined the Royal Air Force and very soon obtained his pilot's certificate, ultimately receiving promotion to the rank of Group Captain, which he now holds.

The following extract from the letter of a very distinguished soldier gives an interesting tribute: "It has been my privilege to be brought into close relations with the Duke of York, and I can only say that those relations could not have been more pleasant. The Duke appreciates the utmost frankness, and always met me more than half-way in any special request that I thought it necessary to make. In fact, there is in his character a very lovable trait—a striving for the right course and an intense desire for knowledge which, when acquired, he is equally anxious to pass on to those in authority or in high position—for he is nothing if not practical, and his speeches are full of suggestions for the wider diffusion of that knowledge for the greater benefit of the Empire.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

“Though apt to be shy socially, if he finds an interesting and congenial companion he becomes agreeably alert, and can talk with great intelligence and acumen.”

The news of this deservedly popular Prince's engagement to an English girl was greeted with wide rejoicing. Had the country known that, in addition to the charm and grace apparent to all, this young girl also brought to her Royal husband's aid a strength of character and a fund of wisdom known only to her intimates, the rejoicings would have been even greater.

Chapter XVII  
*THE WEDDING*



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE WEDDING

**I**N THE days of the Strathmores' ancestors the dowry of the family used to be "half a moonlit night"; that is to say, half the booty that the Knights could steal on a roystering moonlit night.

No doubt the preparations then made for a family wedding were very simple. Those made for the wedding of the twentieth-century descendant of those lawless knights were correspondingly elaborate. The following notice gives some idea of the picturesque formalities that precede a Royal wedding.

"As soon as the date for the Royal wedding has been fixed and the place for the ceremony decided upon, arrangements will be made at the Archbishop of Canterbury's Faculty Office for the engrossing of the marriage license.

"The document will be prepared by the veteran clerk of the Faculty Office, Mr. Bull, who for fifty years has been writing ordinary licenses and engrossing Royal licenses. For three days

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

he will stoop over a roll of parchment nearly a yard square in a locked room. He will use nearly twenty quill pens of various thicknesses and will write the license in old English lettering with black ink."

Accompanied by the Duke, Lady Elizabeth went up to Glamis for a few days, and from there they visited Edinburgh.

Except for some visits to Sandringham, she spent all the rest of the time between her engagement and her marriage in London. Eight bridesmaids were chosen—two children—her little nieces Cecilia Lyon and Elizabeth Elphinstone—and six of her friends: Lady Mary Cambridge, Lady Catherine Hamilton, Lady May Cambridge, Lady Mary Thynne, Miss Diamond Hardinge, and Miss Betty Cator.

Hundreds of letters had to be answered, and presents poured in, often presented by deputations of the donors. Bandbox by bandbox the simple but very beautiful trousseau was gradually accumulated in Bruton Street, and much of it was wonderfully worked at home by a very fine needlewoman, employed for years in the family. The lovely wedding-dress was of ivory



## THE WEDDING

chiffon mousmé, with pearl embroideries on cloth of silver: a narrow panel of this silver and embroidery falling between the shoulders at the back to gleam through the long bridal veil of exquisite old lace lent by the Queen.

April 26th dawned wet and dull, but in the course of the morning, pale sunshine gradually filtered through the greyness. The crowds deserved the comfort of its warmth, for they had not waited to see what the weather might hold in store. The glamour of the occasion had been sufficient invitation. The chill wan hours of early morning had found them eagerly assembled: and Whitehall, that highway of history, had never been thronged with denser or more patient crowds.

Young and old had come forth in their thousands to share with ungrudging sympathy in the joy of another man and woman, a joy accessible to every human being, but for these two, whom Chance had set on high, made memorably beautiful by the pomp and pageantry so dear to the English.

In Parliament Square flags were flying and

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

green garlands swinging in the wind. Outside the Abbey the high wooden stands held thousands of spectators, and from every lamp-post determined boys hung in grape-like clusters.

Mounted policemen moved about, gently backing their excited horses into bulging sections of the perfectly behaved crowd, and St. John Ambulance men wheeled their stretchers up and down the line, searching for victims of too-prolonged standing.

As the hour of the wedding approached, the calm majesty of the Abbey, where the dead still keep their state, was gradually invaded by a motley crowd of the living. Soldiers, Statesmen, Indian Princes, Labour Members, Diplomats; a moving mass of colour, they slowly filed in and were ushered to their seats by scarlet men-at-arms carrying pikes.

From the great organ came the sounds of Purcell's beautiful suite, its strains slowly floating up to wander and stray among the echoes in the dim upper spaces, whose mystery was pierced by the long shafts of light; long shafts that scattered through the twilight of the arches the frag-



THE DUCHESS AS BRIDE LEAVES 17 BRUTON STREET



## THE WEDDING

ments of a broken rainbow, and touched the gilded reredos of the altar, on which golden vessels glistened and candles palely flickered.

Even in this dim religious light the brilliancy of the massed uniforms was dazzling. The gorgeous clash of scarlet, silver, blue and gold, the shining swords and medals, the jewelled turbans: all these united to reduce the wedding garments of the women to insignificance.

The music ceased. Expectancy grew. In solemn splendour of crimson and gold the Clergy thronged into the Sanctuary.

The Archbishop of Canterbury with his glittering staff took up his stand before the altar. From far away came the sound of distant cheering: louder and louder, until it burst in a roar that echoed against the Abbey walls. The great assembly rose to receive the King and Queen, and the Royal procession took their seats in the chairs on the right of the altar.

Another great burst of cheering greeted the bridegroom. Between his two brothers he advanced up the aisle. Impulsively Queen Alexandra rose and embraced her three grandsons.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

The bridegroom's ordeal of waiting is not long, for soon the loudest cheer of all is heard. The most poignant moment of every wedding has come.

The bride is here.

Startlingly, piercingly sweet rise the choir boys' voices—"Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us," and through the wide-open doors to which all eyes are turned she enters with her white following. It is as though those doors were letting in the Spring.

Her father takes her by the hand, and slowly they advance up the nave. Before them a golden cross is carried high. As she reaches the steps the bridegroom moves to her side, and they face the altar together, the sun shining full on their bowed heads as the familiar ritual is spoken.

The Archbishop of York addresses them in words of grave gentleness, and then they move into King Edward the Confessor's Chapel to sign the register while the strains of "God Save the King" fill the Abbey.

Soon the bride and bridegroom reappear. Her veil is now thrown back, and from her flower-

## THE WEDDING

like face shine radiance and quiet confidence, as hand in hand with her husband she walks through the long avenue of onlookers and out to her new life among the cheering crowds beyond.





Chapter XVIII  
*EARLY MARRIED LIFE*



## CHAPTER XVIII

### EARLY MARRIED LIFE

FOR the first days of their honeymoon the Duke and Duchess of York went to stay at Polesden Lacey, the beautiful home of Mrs. Ronald Greville. From there, after an afternoon spent with the Duchess's parents in Bruton Street, they travelled up to Glamis. Here, as may be imagined, they were given an enthusiastic welcome. Cheering crowds thronged into the station to greet the Prince and his bride, and under the restraining eye of the station-master the Duchess's own troupe of Girl Guides, possessively proud, lined up to meet their District Commissioner's train.

In the familiar beauty of the Scottish home of her childhood the Duke and Duchess stayed until towards the end of May, when they travelled south to spend the last fortnight of their honeymoon at Frogmore.

About the middle of June they settled into their new home in Richmond Park: the White Lodge, given up to them by Lord Farquhar, a

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

former Master of the Household. During their absence in Scotland the Queen had been very busy preparing the house for her son and daughter-in-law. This labour of love must have stirred many memories, for White Lodge had been the scene of her own childhood, having for twenty-eight years been the home of her mother the Duchess of Teck. It was also the birthplace of the Prince of Wales, who was born whilst the Queen, then Duchess of York, was staying with her parents.

Within so short a distance from London, a more delightful dwelling could scarcely be found. A square-built Georgian house with spacious rooms, it stands in a large garden on one of the most beautiful sites in Richmond Park. On this site there was originally a small hunting-box built by George I, from a design by the Earl of Pembroke, "as a place of refreshment after the fatigues of the Chase." George II's wife, Queen Caroline, to whom we owe the Serpentine in Hyde Park, fell in love with the hunting-box and its surroundings, and built the present centre block with its classical pillars on the garden front. When Princess Amelia, daughter of



*Photo by Topical Press*

THE DUCHESS WITH GIRL GUIDES AT PUDSEY, YORKSHIRE,  
IN APRIL, 1928



## EARLY MARRIED LIFE

George II, was made Ranger of the Park and came to live there, it was decided to enlarge the house, and two pavilion blocks, connected to the house by quadrant passages, were added. The building of these two wings, begun by Princess Amelia, was finished by Lord Bute, who succeeded her as Ranger of the Park.

It will be remembered that Sir Walter Scott made White Lodge the setting for the famous scene in *The Heart of Midlothian*, when Jeanie Deans, in an interview with Queen Caroline, pleads for her sister's life. During Jeanie Deans' journey to the Queen, the Duke of Argyll points out to her the beauties of the view from Richmond Hill. "This is a fine scene," says he. "We have nothing like it in Scotland." "It's braw rich feeding for the cows," replies Jeanie.

To give but one of the many interesting historical associations of this house: In 1805, when Mr. Addington, later Lord Sidmouth, was living there, Nelson visited him, and, with a finger dipped in wine, traced on a table (now preserved at Up Ottery Manor) the tactics he subsequently used at Trafalgar.

Its well-shaded lawns, rose gardens, lily pond,

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

and fine tennis courts make White Lodge an ideal summer residence. In such surroundings weeks could have been spent in happy idleness, but the part the Duchess had, by her marriage, undertaken, soon proved a very exacting one to play. Her smiling presence was clamoured for, and little time was left her for the enjoyment of her own home.

Each day she was asked to become Patroness of several societies, to visit hospitals, to lay foundation-stones. Every sort of appeal poured in, and each one had to be seriously considered and answered. The daily post became a very formidable factor in her life. Then there were Court Functions to attend, and visits to be paid with her husband to Industrial Centres, visits that sometimes involved a stay of two days.

As may be imagined, all these new interests and activities left little leisure for lotus-eating in Richmond Park.

To find herself the central figure at large gatherings would have alarmed the average girl into awkwardness. It was like being suddenly called upon to act a leading part without any rehearsal; to be the *prima donna* at your début. But of any





*Photo by Topical Press*

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS ARRIVE AT GLAMIS ON THEIR  
HONEYMOON



## EARLY MARRIED LIFE

shyness the new Princess may have felt, there were no outward signs. From the outset her manner was a perfect blend of delicate dignity and radiant friendliness, and there was no resisting the contagion of the happiness she diffused around her.

However, as she never does anything superficially, but, so to speak, smiles with her whole being, each undertaking involves a great expense of vitality, and by the end of July she was very tired and very glad to go up to Scotland, first, as in every August of her life, to Glamis, and later to Balmoral.

Early in October the Duke and she returned to White Lodge, and on the morning of the 18th they started on the three-days' journey to Serbia, where the Duke acted as godfather to the infant son of King Alexander and Queen Marie. They stayed there two days, being guests at a house-warming party, for the Serbian Royal Family had only just arrived at the vast new palace built on the site of the old one, which had been bombarded and destroyed by the Austrians in 1914.

To be the godfather of a Serbian baby is no sinecure, for it entails the responsibility of super-

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

vising the child's education, and later on the godson has to obtain his godfather's consent to his choice of a **bride**. Neither was the Duke a lay figure during the elaborate ritual of the christening. Before becoming a Christian called Peter, the baby had much to undergo. His godfather carried him into the chapel and held him through the first part of the service, until his grandmother, the Queen of Roumania, "unswathed" him. After which the Duke handed him to the Patriarch for total immersion in the font. Then the new Christian was anointed, and a cross was put round his neck by his grandmother; after which the Duke, preceded by a deacon with a thurible, had to carry him three times round the altar. The complicated ceremony ended with the cutting of a lock of hair from the baby's head.

The Duchess's ever-increasing popularity kept her very busy during the autumn and winter. The number of her engagements made the distance of White Lodge from London seem more and more of a drawback: and when, at the beginning of the season of 1924, Princess Mary, at that time in her Yorkshire home, suggested



*Photo by Lafayette*

LADY CYNTHIA MOSLEY'S SON PRESENTS THE DUCHESS WITH A BOUQUET



## EARLY MARRIED LIFE

that the Duke and Duchess should live for a time at Chesterfield House, the offer was gladly accepted. From this convenient base a mosaic of engagements was undertaken and carried out.

During July the Duke and Duchess paid an official visit to Northern Ireland, staying first at Clondeboye and then with the Governor-General at Baron's Court.

They then went to Scotland, returning to make the necessary preparations for their expedition to East Africa.





Chapter XIX

*THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR*

*(Dec. 1924—April 1925)*



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR

(Dec. 1924-April 1925)

THE Duke and Duchess of York spent a day or two attending functions in each capital, but their expedition to East Africa was not an official tour. Its purposes were change and shooting, both of which were amply provided by the countries they visited.

To the Duchess, who had never been further abroad than France and Italy, these months of open-air life and adventurous travel were a wonderful experience. As a companion, she took with her Lady Annay, one of her greatest friends from childhood. The Duke was escorted by Captain B. V. Brooke and Lieut.-Commander Buist.

Before starting, they were busily engaged in planning details, studying maps, consulting books of reference and buying guns and kit.

At last all was ready, and they left England on December 1st. For those interested in travel I will give a brief account of the whole expedition. They sailed from Marseilles on the *Mul-*

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

*bera* on the 5th, and arrived at Mombasa on the 22nd. There they were met by the Governor of Kenya, Sir Robert Coryndon, with whom they drove round the town, lunched at Government House, and afterwards attended a garden-party and a "ngoma," or native dance, which was held in a large open square.

That same night they left in the Governor's special train for Nairobi, Kenya.

During this journey they saw, about sixty miles distant, the magnificent snow-capped Kilimanjaro, and passed through the famous Athi plains. While the train was going through the Game Reserve, the Duke and Duchess sat on a seat on the front of the engine and, fascinated, watched all kinds of fantastic animals scurrying across the track. They stayed three days at Nairobi and then drove to Embu, where they were welcomed by the local chiefs and their tribes in all the fierce magnificence of war-paint and feathers. They spent the night sleeping in little huts scattered over the lovely plains, and starting early the next morning towards Meru drove in pouring rain through forests and vast undeveloped tracts. The cars had to ford swollen



*Photo by Topical Press*

THE DUCHESS WITH THE EARL OF ATHOLE PASSING DOWN A GUARD OF HONOUR  
OF CHILDREN AT THE "FUN FAIR," ST. DUNSTON'S, REGENT PARK



## THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR

rivers. One of them was soon waterlogged, and seven of the party had to squeeze themselves into one small Buick. It was very late before they reached the camp in which they were to spend a few days before setting out on *safari*.

The Duchess used to get up very early and assiduously practise shooting at a target with her rifle, a 275 Rigby. No one was more surprised than herself to find she had that mysterious thing, a "good eye," but it immediately asserted itself, and she very soon became a remarkably good shot. In the wilds of Africa it is necessary to be able to shoot, as each time you walk round a bush you may meet a lion face to face, an unpleasant encounter if you are unarmed. Their first camp was on a very large plain facing the eighty-miles-distant Mount Kenya. Here they slept in small bamboo huts and ate in a big *banda* or open-sided shed.

There were myriads of wonderful jewel-like birds and butterflies; ostriches roamed round the camp, and all night long the travellers could hear the roar of lions and the gallop of zebras.

In this district wet weather is unusual in these months, but on January 8th it rained in torrents

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

and went on for two or three days. Fortunately the huts were fairly watertight, but walking became very difficult, for the camp was on black cotton soil which, when wet, becomes extremely slippery.

On the 9th of January they went off on *safari*, which meant living in tents, travelling very light, and moving camp practically every day until they reached Siola. They would strike camp at 5.30 in the morning and march till noon over terribly hard going of lava rock and thick bush. The Duchess nearly always accompanied the Duke on his shooting expeditions, and when he had shot the specimen, armed with field-glasses and cameras they spent many happy hours studying and photographing the wonderful herds of animals that still roam the vast plains and thick bush.

During these weeks of camp life the timetable of a shooting day would be:

- 5.15 A.M. Called.
- 5.45 " Tea and a biscuit.
- 5.50 " Leave camp for morning shoot.
- 11.00 " Return to camp.



## THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR

11.30 A.M. Breakfast? Lunch?

3.30 P.M. Leave camp for afternoon shoot.

6.30 " Return camp, bath and change.

7.30 " Dinner.

9.30 " Bed.

The wonderful climate—glowing hot days and refreshingly cold nights—made camp life very enjoyable.

On February 4th they returned to Nairobi, leaving it on the 7th to set out for Uganda and the long trek down the Nile.

They stayed a few days with Lord and Lady Francis Scott in the delightful house they have built at Rangai, and on February 27th very regretfully said good-bye to their companions and to Kenya, and embarked in a small boat to cross Victoria Nyanza, the huge lake that is just large enough to hold the whole of Ireland. On their way across the Lake the Duke and Duchess stopped at Jinja to see the source of the White Nile at the Ripon Falls.

On the afternoon of February 13th they arrived at Entebbe, where they were met by natives in racing canoes singing their tribal songs.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Here they remained for three days, staying at Government House and spending one day at Kampala, the native capital, where they visited the King of Uganda and received gifts of ivory and skins.

From Entebbe they went on to Fort Portal, where a "lukiko" (a native parliament) was held and presents and addresses exchanged. After one night's rest they left Fort Portal, which lies right under the Mountains of the Moon, and descended the escarpment into the Semliki Valley. Here, instead of in tents, they slept in queerly-shaped mud huts made by the natives of different coloured clays and painted with entertaining designs of animals and hunting weapons.

To reach their next camp they had to walk for fifteen miles through this valley, where Solomon is said to have collected the ivory which he gave to the Queen of Sheba. The grass was very dry at that time, and they saw several destructive bush-fires. The only drinking-water they could procure was of a dark coffee colour and full of mud. Before it could be drunk it had to be strained with alum, a process which turned it an even more unpleasing colour, but its taste was

## THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR

not unbearable. On February 25th they came to a tiny landing-place on Lake Albert, and boarded the *Samuel Baker*, on which they were sorely tried by mosquitoes, and it was so hot that every one slept on deck.

They reached Nimule, and after motoring in Fords over a rough track, they joined the steamer *Nasir*, in which they progressed down the White Nile for five weeks. The *Nasir* was a very comfortable boat, and the inevitable mosquitoes were the only drawback. The party often disembarked and camped on shore for a few days at a time in search of various game. On these occasions natives—magnificent specimens of humanity—used to arrive in full dress and dance a welcome.

The last night they spent in camp was no rest cure. A wild wind blew up. Rain fell in torrents. The Duchess's tent fell in twice, and she and all her belongings were drenched.

Disembarking at Tonga, they motored up into the mountains to see a march-past of twelve thousand Nubians, followed by a display of wrestling, spear-throwing, and dancing. At Kodok, the local King appeared, bringing the

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Duke and Duchess shields and other gifts, and his tribe danced their famous "lion dance"—a pantomime of a lion hunt, in which two of the performers represent the prey, wearing masks and carrying lions' tails, and a third is the hyena. They also waged a mock battle, hurling assegais and dexterously stopping them on their shields. They moved with marvellous grace, and their wild tribal songs were strangely eerie.

On April 6th the Duke and Duchess were met by the Governor of the Province at Kosti, and went by train to Makwar to see the great dam which was then practically finished. It is a huge concrete structure, the factory for making the concrete alone having cost £200,000. Its object is to dam the Blue Nile in order to irrigate the land for cotton-growing.

At Khartoum the Duke and Duchess inspected some troops and attended an evening reception in the beautiful gardens. Their last adventure was in the Suez Canal, when they were held up by a sandstorm, and the passage was prolonged from twelve to twenty-four hours.

In the middle of April they reached London, the richer for imperishable memories and a large

## THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR

number of fine "heads." Of those that fell to the Duchess's rifle, the best was the Rufifrous Gazelle, which she shot in the Soudan. This measured over thirteen inches on the front curve of the horn.

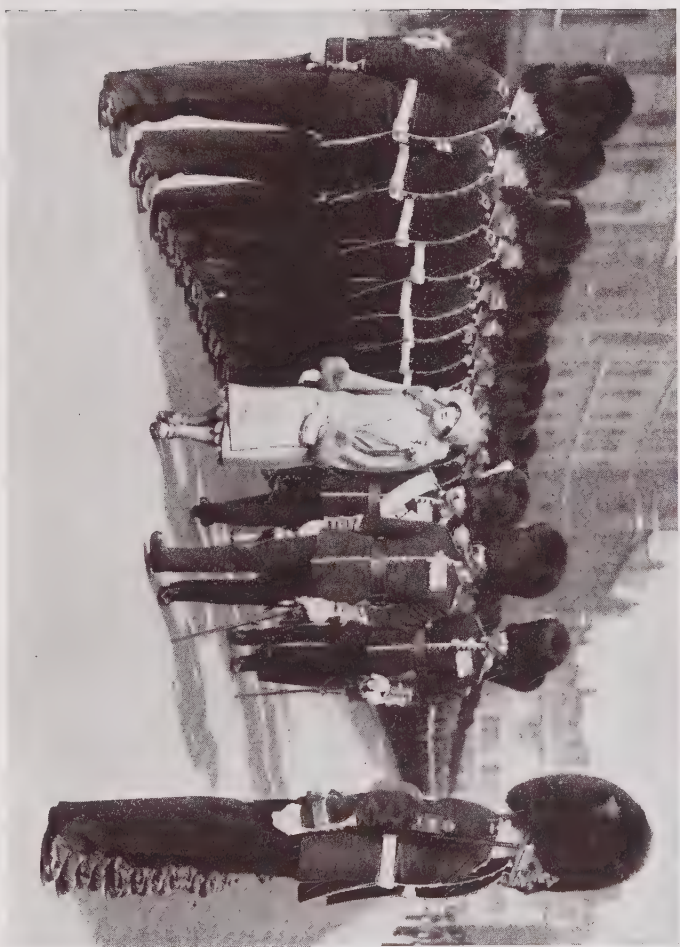
During these adventurous travels she proved herself a very hardy campaigner and a lightning "quick-change artist."

The agility with which she could readjust herself to the occasional demands of polite society which punctuated the uncivilised weather-beaten life they led and, substituting a parasol for a gun, smilingly appear looking as though she had never left London, was wonderful.

One of her fellow-travellers writes: "During our African tour the Duchess showed her great versatility by thoroughly enjoying the various *safaris* and shoots, proving herself an exceptionally good shot, and in her enthusiasm often walking fifteen miles through rough bush country where the going was of the hardest. Day after day T.R.H. would set off from camp long before dawn, each carrying rifle, field-glasses and ammunition, returning at sunset after an exciting stalk to a meal consisting of their day's bag. On

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

several occasions the Duchess, after spending some weeks in camp, wearing the usual *safari* clothes, and living *entirely* out of doors, had to return to complete and formal civilisation—a great change, but one which did not in the least worry her, as she would appear in a quarter of an hour looking as though she had never been motoring miles in a Ford over roads which in England would be considered impassable, or creeping through thorn bush and wading waist-high in a swamp.”



*Photo by Topical Press*

THE DUCHESS OF YORK PRESENTS SPRIGS OF SHAMROCK TO THE IRISH GUARDS  
AT CHELSEA BARRACKS





Chapter XX

*HOME AND AUSTRALIA*



## CHAPTER XX

### HOME AND AUSTRALIA

**A**FTER this wonderful holiday the Duchess returned to a very strenuous home life. Her radiant presence was more in demand than ever, and she consented to grace a great many ceremonies.

Eight a day, I am told, is the average number of the functions that she is asked to attend. Naturally only a small proportion of these requests can be granted, but each has to be carefully considered. Assisted by her lady-in-waiting, she always deals with her correspondence in the early morning, and every single letter she receives is scrupulously answered.

As she joins to her sense of public duty the determination to keep in close touch with all the friends of her girlhood, it is clear that her life must be very full. It was during the crowded summer of 1925 that she accompanied the Duke on several important visits to the huge industrial towns in the North of England. Here there were enormous crowds eager to catch a glimpse of the

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

smiling Princess, who looked so happy that the contagion spread and everyone began to beam. As she drove past, men and women shouted endearing epithets, and those who were too poor to buy flags decorated their houses with red flannel petticoats and their children's frocks.

For the early autumn of 1925 the Duchess went with the Duke to her beloved Scotland, spending a month at Glamis and a month at Balmoral. After their return to London they lived for a few weeks in Curzon House, Curzon Street, and in the spring they decided to go for some time to her parents' house in Bruton Street. Here, on April 21st, 1926, her baby girl was born. Little Princess Elizabeth was welcomed with general rejoicings, and the quiet house in Bruton Street became one of the sights of London. From morning to night groups of optimists patiently stood on the opposite pavement, eagerly hoping to catch sight of the small white bundle that was "the fourth lady in the land," and, for the time being, third in succession to the throne of England.

Thus the aunt of long apprenticeship was promoted to rapturous motherhood, and found it



*London Electrotape Agency*

THE FAMOUS SMILE



## HOME AND AUSTRALIA

so absorbing a vocation that the first happy weeks and months rushed past, and all too soon the winter came and, with it, the necessity to make a great sacrifice.

The Duke was to go on an Imperial mission to open the first Parliament held in the new Australian capital—Canberra. Naturally his wife must accompany him, and this meant leaving Princess Elizabeth, then only eight months old, and missing no less than half a year of her delicious babyhood.

Had the chance come earlier in her life the Duchess would have welcomed the prospect of going round the world, but now that strong strands, newly twisted of motherly love and anxiety tethered her, severance was agony. During this separation the perfect plaything she was leaving must inevitably change out of all recognition. Those early phases are so swift, babies so fickle to their own changing charms. How many thousand laughs she must miss, how many delicious “ways” and enthralling beginnings! First words—first steps—first “Let’s pretend.” None of these would she see. Neither could she hope to be remembered.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Though it was with an aching heart that the Duchess set forth to "put a girdle round the earth," she showed no outward repining. Never had she radiated happiness more successfully than during the long weeks of the voyage.

Entering into all the amusements of life on board ship, she added the rôle of dancing mistress to her other activities; but the voyage and the whole of the Australian visit have been so well and so fully described by Mr. Darbyshire in his official book on the Royal tour, that no purpose would be served by giving an account of them in these pages.

The programme of their tour and the enthusiasm with which the Royal party were received in every town they visited is now well known; how well the Duke played his part is also common knowledge, but a few words about the Duchess in this connection may add a little fresh colour to her portrait.

Though deeply interesting and most enjoyable, it must be admitted the tour was a very exhausting experience. The time was so short for the length of the programme, and the days had to be terribly overcrowded. This made it a great





*Photo by Speaight*

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER



## HOME AND AUSTRALIA

and continuous strain, especially on one so unsparing of her own vitality as the Duchess.

All speak in the highest praise of the indefatigable spirit she displayed, also of her ceaseless consideration for her companions and efforts to save them fatigue she never sought to spare herself. She could not bear to disappoint any expectations, and it was a great grief to her when the Doctor pronounced her to be suffering from a severe attack of tonsilitis and absolutely forbade her to accompany the Duke to South Island. Before succumbing to this illness she had behaved with dangerous fortitude. For three days she had concealed her sufferings, and though she had a very high temperature, of which she told no one, had motored all day long on a dusty road, smiling as radiantly as ever and refusing to have the hood of the car up.

Her companions only began to suspect her illness through noticing that she talked less and accepted every decision without that friendly argumentativeness which is natural to her.

It was equally characteristic that whatever the fierceness of the sun she always persisted in wear-

ing a hat with an upturned brim so that her face should not be hidden.

At one place amongst the huge crowd assembled to greet her, she recognised a soldier who had been a patient at Glamis, and immediately sent for him to come and shake hands with her. That it was not possible to shake hands with everyone who wished for it was one of her continual regrets. Had she done so, her knuckles would have been ground to powder. It was of course necessary to treat each gathering, large or small, in the same way, so it was decided that she should not shake hands except with people who were formally presented. At the last public appearance she joyfully exclaimed: "Ah! this time we can shake hands with everybody. There aren't more than a thousand people and, as it's the last time, we needn't worry about making a precedent!"

In various towns she came across several of the officers who had stayed at Glamis during the war, and they were delighted to meet the Princess they so well remembered as the gay child who used to sing to them, run races with them, coolly drive a pair of thoroughbreds which many



THE DUCHESS ARRIVES AT MELBOURNE



## HOME AND AUSTRALIA

of her guests thought twice about handling and, when the head gardener was not looking, lead raids on the hot-houses for grapes.

The impression she made on a resident in Australia may be of interest, so I quote from a letter written to me by a friend now living at Melbourne:

“Rumour had reached us in Melbourne of the embarrassingly loyal behaviour of some of the other towns. Friends brought news of hustling and jostling of the royal party; of crowds pushing up everywhere, and even of the Duchess’s dress being so fingered by the curious that it was unfit for further use. Melbourne was determined to show its superior courtesy, and the Government House Ball was certainly quite decorous. Naturally we were all consumed with curiosity and used our eyes with all our might, but the royal lady was not disturbed or ruffled by the attentions of the guests.

“It is astounding that so small a form can carry such dignity with it, and as she moved through the crowd, or danced with a favoured few, there was a space about her all the time.

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

People were intrigued because Her Royal Highness danced and sat out with one partner who had no uniform or orders, and only the medals which show war service from 1914 to the end. A pretty story hangs on this. All through the War, Lord and Lady Strathmore were kind to oversea officers and among these was a young engineer officer from Tasmania who had seen service in Egypt, at the Dardanelles, and in France. The Strathmores were extremely good to him and invited him on several occasions to spend his leave at Glamis. He liked Lady Elizabeth immensely, and when he went back to France she wrote to him from time to time. Letters had such value to men who were twelve thousand miles from home. Lady Strathmore had also been more than kind, and would get up early on dark winter mornings to give him breakfast before he got the train back to the Channel and the front. So he had very grateful memories of all the family, and though he was very busy making a business for himself when the War was over and had a wife and young family to care for, he never forgot Lady Eliza-





THE DUCHESS WITH HER FIRST CATCH IN AUSTRALIA



beth, and kept all her letters and snapshots of her.

“When he heard of her marriage he felt it less likely than ever that he would ever see her again in her new and important position, and when the Royal visit to Australia was announced, he felt diffident about making himself known to her. However, he wrote to her (after tremendous family consultations as to the correct way to address a Royal Highness) and told her how happily he remembered his visits to Glamis and how he hoped to see her at some of the official functions. For some days there was no answer—indeed, he did not expect one, knowing the crowded life she was leading—but at length a telephone message came from Government House to say that H.R.H. wanted him to come to see her the following day. It was a delightful visit, for the Duchess had him in her sitting-room for a long talk, and so successfully laid the weight of royalty aside that he could have fancied himself at Glamis again with the friend he had known. When she dismissed him she told him she wanted to dance with him that night

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

at the ball and would send for him. And accordingly that evening an A.D.C. fetched him and took him up to the dais, and when the Duke of York came up, she said: 'I want to introduce my husband to you.'

"That is the explanation of why her first and second partners were the Governor-General and Prime Minister, and the third a civilian with no signs of glory.

"We were amused by the copies of the Duchess and her hats which filled the streets during her visit. Every girl with any pretence to looks had bought or 'made over' a hat with a turned-up brim and a bunch of feathers at one side and was smiling more or less attractively. On one occasion the first prize for fancy dress went to a couple of girls who dressed as the Duke and Duchess—one in the inevitable hat and the other in a borrowed naval uniform, and I feel convinced that the prizes were given on loyal and sentimental grounds.

"I feel certain that the Royal visit did a great deal of good. It is impossible to realise how cut-off one is in Australia if you haven't been there,



*Photo by Marcus Adams*

A REUNITED FAMILY



## HOME AND AUSTRALIA

and a personal visit makes an enormous difference.

“We all felt for Her Royal Highness in the crowded days that she had to spend, and we all marvelled at the grace and courage that carried her through them.”





Chapter XXI

*PRINCESS ELIZABETH'S SHIP  
COMES IN*



## CHAPTER XXI

### PRINCESS ELIZABETH'S SHIP COMES IN

TOWARDS the end of June, as the *Renown* approached the English shore, the baby Princess Elizabeth might well have sung:

“I see a ship a-sailing  
A-sailing o’er the Sea,  
And it is deeply laden  
With pretty things for me.”

Surely no ship was ever more deeply laden with treasures for one child. At every halt in their progress, presents to take home to their daughter had been showered on the Duke and Duchess, and the *Renown* returned a veritable Argosy, bearing in her hold nearly *three tons* of toys, ornaments, knick-knacks and gewgaws of every description, dolls far larger than the Princess herself, and a regiment of giant teddy bears.

She also brought to the little Princess two singing canaries, twenty squawking parrots, and a real live father and mother; a father and

mother so eager for sight of their child that a new set of her photographs had been sent out to them by every mail!

Lent to devoted grandparents during these six months, Princess Elizabeth, in the clever charge of the nurse who brought up her mother, had never had so much as a cold in the head. She had thrived in every sense of the word, and developed into a personality. At eighteen months of age she knows how to smile strangers into slavery, and will hold out her arms to a crowd just as though it were one chocolate that she wanted to put in her mouth!

Babies can be so crushing; seldom troubling to soften your fall if you fail to amuse them. Not so the little Princess Elizabeth. If she sees—and she is very quick to see—that you are trying to be funny, she will always reward your efforts with a radiant smile. Perhaps she has inherited her mother's instinctive courtesy? Or perhaps she is blessed with the facility of being pleased as well as of pleasing? Certainly she is endowed with an enviable natural serenity. And her social gifts are remarkable.

This golden-crested "little friend of all the



*Photo by Luton Thurston*

PRINCESS ELIZABETH WAITS FOR HER SHIP TO COME IN



world," who has a complexion of transparent fairness and a brilliant blue gaze, has captivated London. Indeed, her popularity has already inconvenienced her, for owing to her perambulator being mobbed by importunate admirers she has been obliged to give up her agreeable outings in the Park.

On the afternoon of June 27th Princess Elizabeth was dressed in her finest frock and taken from her new home in Piccadilly to Buckingham Palace.

Here she heard a strangely loud noise, and was told that it was kind people saying how glad they were that her father and mother had come home safely. "Father" and "Mother" were pictures in frames that lived in the nursery, so she was puzzled by this information. "There's Mother!" she hears the Queen say, and she sees a very pretty excited lady who exclaims, "Oh! you darling!"

How will the baby receive this stranger mother?

It is an anxious moment.

All is well. Princess Elizabeth seems almost as pleased to see her mother as if she were quite

## THE DUCHESS OF YORK

a large crowd. Her round face breaks into a wide smile and her arms go out.

Thus, happily reunited, we leave this enchanting pair of smiling Elizabeths. Two wishes rise in one's heart: that the daughter may grow to resemble her mother, and that for the mother the Summer of life may prove as fair as its Spring.

THE END





*Photo by Speaight*

THE LATEST PHOTOGRAPH OF DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK







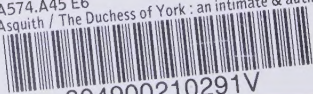


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